



## INTERNATIONAL EDITION

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For this March-April issue, we bring you three student profiles with an international focus, including that of Luz Diaz (M.S. Graduate Program in International Studies), Shakia Taylor (M.S. Educational Leadership), and David Williams Tortolini (M.A. Humanities), as well as photos from our annual Graduate Research Achievement Day. Enjoy, and let us know your thoughts!

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### LUZ DIAS, M.S. INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



Old Dominion University's diversity made me feel at home from the very beginning. The first time I stepped foot on ODU's campus as an undergraduate student – I was so proud of myself. I will always remember that. But I will always thank my parents. They are an authentic depiction of immigrants who pursued the American Dream. Their hard work is indescribable. The political climate in our country motivated me to pursue my master's in International Studies. Because of my diverse background – I've always been intrigued to learn about different cultures and languages. I never had the urge to even pursue my bachelor's degree, because after graduating from high school I didn't even know what that really meant. I am a first generation college student. I was born in Mexico, but I grew up in the United States. That's where my passion for refugee/immigration studies derives from. The American dream I had in mind was to graduate from my local community college in the Eastern Shore as that alone was sufficient. But one thing lead to another and now I'm here finishing up my last year of graduate school with two separate research-abroad experiences under my belt. If someone would have told me a few years ago that I would immerse myself in refugee crisis fieldwork twice, and that I would be writing a thesis on the refugee crises – my answer would have been – "who, me?"

The most rewarding college experience has been my work with Dr. Erika Frydenlund. She saw something in me, and has believed in my capabilities to take on research work. I was a student in her Research Methods course my first year of graduate school. When she introduced herself, she shared her fascinating work in refugee studies. I went up to her during break the first day of class. Needless to say, it was one of the best decisions I've made, because it led to so much more. Alongside Dr. Frydenlund, I traveled to Lesbos, Greece the following spring to conduct fieldwork.

The situation in Lesbos is very real and traumatic as they experienced a major refugee influx in 2015. For my master's thesis, I interviewed locals, refugees, and NGO workers to conduct fieldwork. This involved interviews with citizens of Lesbos, Greece to understand how the refugee crisis has impacted the local community on the island.



*Working with refugees at Kara Tepe Camp in Lesbos, Greece.*

In Lesbos, the local community is desperate. Their compassion soon turned into outrage. The locals were forced to take on humanitarian roles as they were left to care for refugees that arrived to their island. What has made matters worse is that refugees are essentially stuck on the island. After the EU-Turkey agreement, Greece no longer served as just a transit point. To this day, the asylum process can take many months and/or years. This involuntary connection between the locals and the refugees has ultimately created xenophobia on the island. Both refugees and local citizens feel helpless. A local citizen of Lesbos described Lesbos and left me speechless – "it is something that no one can describe - thousands of people coming out of the sea with their babies and their families". I will carry their stories with me forever. There are moments where that's all I can think about. This feeling reassures me that I am studying exactly what I should be studying.

*Continued on the next page*

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## STUDENT PROFILE - LUZ DIAZ (CONTINUED)



To the left: The small town of Molyvos, located in Lesbos, demonstrates a perfect example of let's 'sweep it under the rug' scenario. A place called "Lifejacket Graveyard" is located in Molyvos. This area is a dumping site for the locals, but it symbolizes a large significance about the ongoing crisis that continues to occur in the frontier of Europe today. It symbolizes the dangerous journey that refugees had to surpass to arrive to the island. The location is a signifier to many that there is a considerable amount of tension - refugees are not wanted on the island. Life jackets are thrown in this dumpster site. During my visit in May, I noticed that the life jackets left at the dumpster site were filled with foam. Smugglers provide these life jackets to refugees. In the case that the boat flips over, they would be of no function.



Immediately Above: In Lima, Peru during while completing research in South America



Above: The bridge above is the Simón Bolívar bridge which connects Cucuta, Colombia to Venezuela. It's the main transit point for refugees fleeing Venezuela.

Often times, we shed light on the struggles that refugees take on and how that impacts them. But it's important to think in retrospect, because how the community responds to a crisis changes the entire dynamic. It can be detrimental for the local community and their response. It's imperative to ensure that the struggles that the locals go through when a crisis at this level knocks on their front door are considered. It directly impacts their community's culture.

The problem of host community relations isn't limited to Greece; it affects countries and communities all over the world. After developing my qualitative data collection methods in the field, I traveled with Dr. Frydenlund as a research assistant to Colombia and Peru where the Venezuelans are fleeing economic turmoil. There, I witnessed very similar growing dissent about refugees and the impact on the local community's culture, politics, resources, and social institutions. Like Lesbos, what was once—and is currently for the most part—a humanitarian response is beginning to show fissures that may lead to resentment and xenophobia from hosting fatigue. By exploring Lesbos as a case study, there is a large level of contribution to wider knowledge about host communities and hosting fatigue that could have an impact in other places, such as those neighboring countries now hosting the Venezuelan migrants.

This fieldwork experience in Lesbos and South America has allowed me to grow as a GPIS student and professional. I had the opportunity to utilize my undergraduate degree in Human Services where I developed interpersonal skills that helped me to conduct interviews effectively. I developed new qualitative research skills and volunteered in a refugee camp so I could experience what humanitarian work will be like after I graduate. This research contributes to the humanitarian field—where I hope to work after graduation—by showing how local culture and sentiment impacts the ability to provide successful humanitarian response to crises. My vision in the next few years is to continue to build myself as a professional in the humanitarian field and utilize my fluency in Spanish. When I see images on the current situation in the U.S.-Mexican border - I can't help but think about how that could have easily been me. With a mindset like this, I don't foresee my ambition fading away. I aspire to pursue humanitarian work surrounding global issues upon graduation.

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## STUDENT PROFILE - SHAKIA TAYLOR (M.S. EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP)



### Where are you in your education?

I am a current graduate student in my final semester of the Educational Leadership M.S.Ed. Program, with a concentration in international education.

### What encouraged you to pursue a graduate education?

I originally majored in history for my undergraduate degree. I knew I wanted to pursue a graduate education and hopefully work for a college or university, but I wasn't sure if I wanted to go into teaching or not. Actually, I accidentally stumbled upon my current program when I was researching graduate schools. I was looking into programs that combined my "international" interests with my desire to work in higher education. I was relieved when I discovered the Educational Leadership M.S.Ed. Program because it combines my two main interests.

### What encouraged you to choose our current field?

I love all things international! I had a wonderful experience studying abroad during my senior year of my undergraduate education here at ODU, and ever since then I've been hooked! My experiences studying abroad and engaging with international students fueled my passion for international education and led me to attend ODU for my master's degree. As a career, I hope to support students throughout their educational journey in, and outside of the United States.

### Please tell us about your research interests and how you see that fitting in with the department's/ college's mission/direction.

My research interests include international student and scholar mobility, issues related to international student success in U.S. higher education, and internationalization at U.S. higher education institutions. I believe that international students and scholars greatly contribute to the ODU community. These interests directly tie into my professional goals and are important topics that are discussed in my program.



### What factors attracted you to apply to ODU?

I really enjoy ODU's campus community. I was already familiar with ODU while I was here for my bachelor's degree, and I saw it as a wonderful environment to stay in to complete my graduate education. In addition, there are an abundance of on-campus resources, professional development opportunities, and wonderful events to attend in my free time.

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## STUDENT PROFILE - DAVID WILLIAMS-TORTOLINI (M.A. HUMANITIES)

### What are your hobbies?

Traveling is a passion of mine, and I try to go on trips when I am afforded the opportunity. I am an avid surfer and love going on surf adventures with my friends.

### What encouraged your motivation to become a professor?

In my undergrad at ODU I was allowed to take classes with some amazing professors who ignited my passions and changed the way I view and interact with the world. I want to emulate them as much as I can and ignite an individual's passions as they did with mine.

### Since you talked about your undergrad professors can you name one or two who ignited this passion?

Sure, two professors that come to mind was my English professor Dr. Appleton and my Geography professor, Dr. Chapman. Taking their classes changed who I am as a scholar and person.

### Who are some guiding or influential figures in your life?

My biggest hero since I was a child has been my grandpa Cachi. We have a special relationship, and without him, I wouldn't be the person I am today.

### What is your greatest strength?

My biggest strength is my perseverance. I feel like nothing can hold me back from my goals.

### What were you doing before you graduate school?

This is interesting because unlike most people who had jobs or careers. I was actually surfing professionally and even had points on the World Qualifying Series. So, I definitely have some funny stories and adventures from that time in my life.

### What interesting qualities or experiences do you feel you bring to ODU?

I feel like I bring a uniqueness to ODU. I see the world differently from being the son of an immigrant, being born overseas, and I am a proud Argentinean-American. I bring the perspectives of my cultural background to ODU.

### What made Old Dominion University stand out?

I love how interdisciplinary my program is. With the ability to take classes in a variety of disciplines and I feel like it has strengthened me as a scholar.

### What is your research in?

My research is in appropriation. I am interested in how cultures and subcultures are victims of appropriation. I look into how the mechanics of appropriation affect its victims and changes the way we view these individuals. I want to find the best ways to celebrate and admire other cultures and identities without leaving individuals to feel victimized.



*At GRAD 2019, March 28th Presentation:  
When Appropriation Becomes a Tool  
of Colonization and Forced Assimilation*

### What do you like most about your research or feel will be its largest implications.

I like the uniqueness of my research. Cultural appropriation happens daily and affects so many people, it is fantastic to see people connect with my work on a personal level. With my application of cultural appropriation in media, I hope my work can help change how media views and writes about individuals from other cultures and subcultures.

### What is your philosophy of teaching and learning?

I feel like I have a unique philosophy to learning and teaching. I love it when my professors make the class material relate to our lives on a personal level. It makes me hungrier to produce my best work when I know that the topic(s) that I am working on relates to me, a family member, or a friend. I want to bring that into my classroom and show the students that what they are learning in the class has a personal connection with them. I feel like this is the best way that students not only learn but also engage with the work.





# FULBRIGHT U.S. STUDENT PROGRAM



## THE FULBRIGHT U.S. STUDENT PROGRAM

WORKSHOP 04/17/2019 12:15 - 1:15

Webb Center - Hampton-Newport News Room

## ENGAGING WITH THE WORLD

**About the Workshop** :: Join the Office of International Programs and IIE's Fulbright Advisor, Mr. Grant Stream-Gonzalez, as we discuss how to apply for this amazing opportunity. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, The Fulbright U.S. Student Program offers fellowships abroad for one academic year to graduating college seniors, graduate students, young professionals, scientists and artists. Program participants pursue graduate or professional study, advanced research, or English teaching in elementary and secondary schools or universities. Each year, approximately 1,600 Americans traveling to more than 140 countries receive support from the Fulbright U.S. Student Program.

### FULBRIGHT STUDENTS

- Are recent college graduates, postgraduates, artists, scientists and other young professionals.
- Strive to foster mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by learning from their hosts overseas while sharing American experiences with their counterparts.
- Represent the richness and diversity of the United States through their varied backgrounds, hometowns and academic institutions.
- Pursue research, teach English or undertake graduate study in a wide range of academic fields in over 140 countries.
- Use their international experiences as cultural ambassadors to enhance their academic and professional careers and become leaders in their fields.



### WHO SHOULD APPLY

The Fulbright U.S. Student Program seeks applications from highly motivated, open-minded individuals in any academic field and from any background. We evaluate candidates based on their cumulative experience and goals; there is no minimum undergraduate GPA requirement. It is not necessary to be enrolled in a college or university at the time of application.

Fulbright candidates should be flexible self-starters with a strong interest in promoting international mutual understanding. Above all, they should be capable of contributing to, and benefiting from, an intensive cultural exchange program.



The Fulbright Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

For more information, visit:  
[eca.state.gov/Fulbright](https://eca.state.gov/Fulbright)



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# 2019 ANNUAL VCLD SYMPOSIUM

## 2019 Annual VCLD Symposium



### INCLUSIVE PRACTICES FOR ALL

The opening session of our VCLD Symposium will host a panel of experts from across the state speaking on ADHD, ASD, co-teaching, early childhood education, EBD, LD/dyslexia, and current special education issues in today's schools.

Breakout sessions will include practical suggestions for teaching students with varying exceptionalities. Attendees will leave the conference with materials and strategies to add to their teaching toolbox.

Saturday, April 27, 2019  
7:30 - 4:00



Darden College of Education  
and Professional Studies

### YOU'RE INVITED!

K-12 general education and special education teachers, future teachers, provisionally licensed teachers, teaching assistants, co-teachers, administrators, reading and math specialists.

### REGISTRATION

#### Early Bird

Attendee	\$50
Student	\$35
Groups of 3	\$145

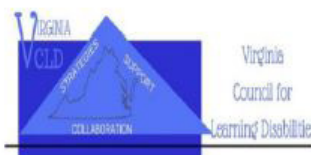
#### After April 1

Attendee	\$55
Student	\$40
Groups of 3	\$155

<https://vclد2019.eventbrite.com>

### Registration includes

- breakfast, lunch, & dessert reception
- closing remarks from Dean Jane Bray
- door prizes
- award of certificate of professional conference attendance



For more information, go to our website <http://VCLD.org>

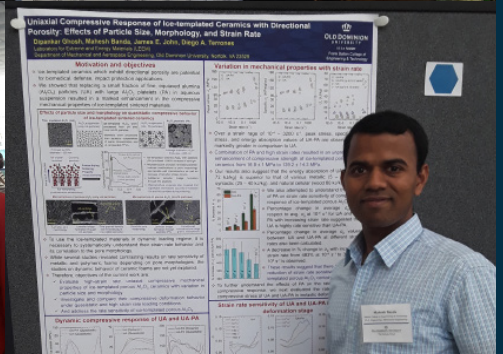
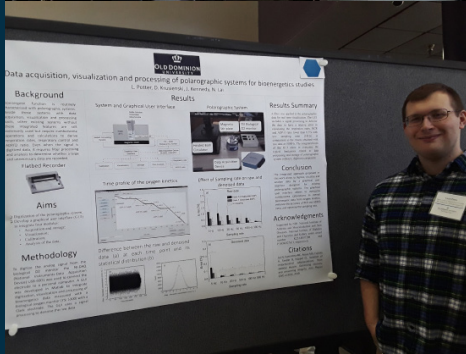
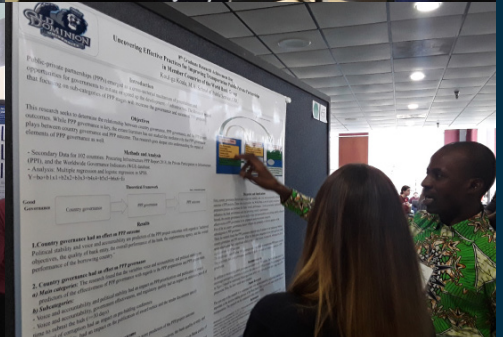
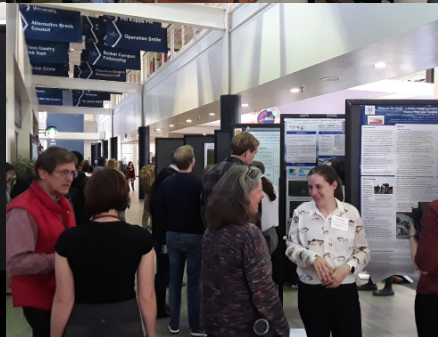
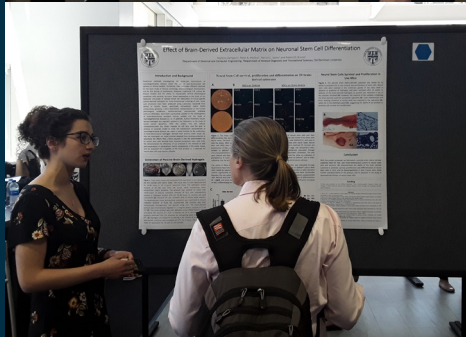
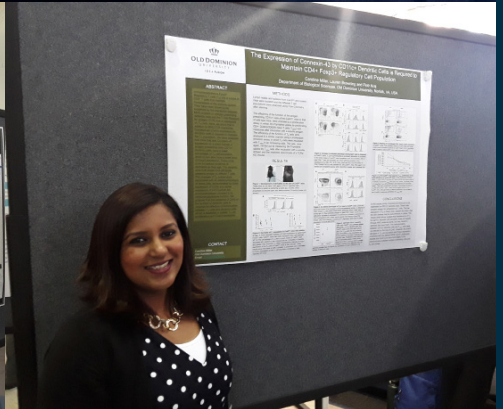
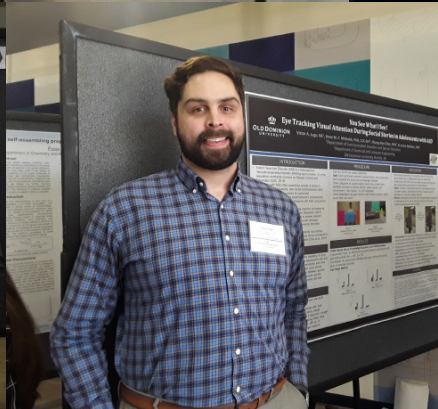
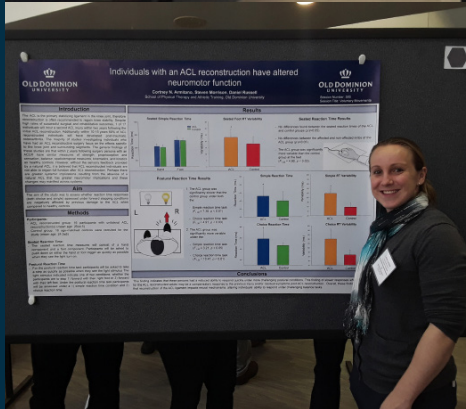
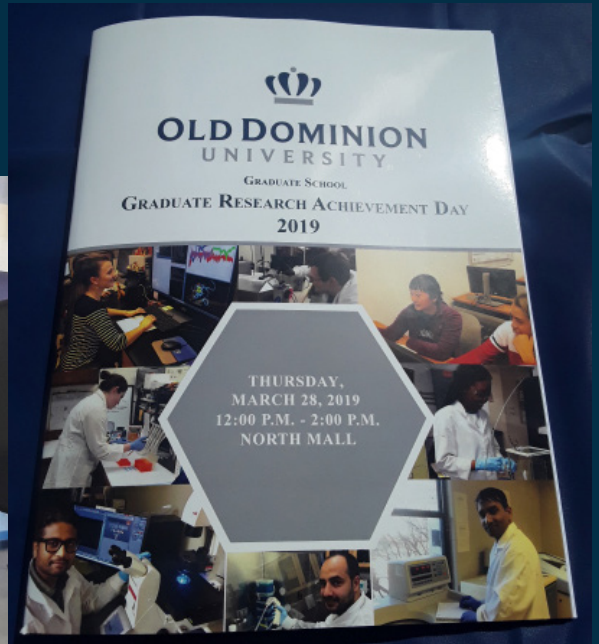
The annual symposium for the Virginia Council for Learning Disabilities will be held at Old Dominion University on Saturday, April 27, 2019. The theme of the symposium is Inclusive Practices for All. K-12 general education and special education teachers, and future teachers are invited to attend. The opening session will host a panel of experts from across the state speaking on their areas of expertise: Dr. Leslie Daniel, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Dr. Judith Fontana, Specific Learning Disabilities, Dr. Robert Gable, Emotional/behavioral Disorders, Dr. Silvana Watson, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dr. Mira Williams, Early Childhood Education, Dr. Margaret Weiss, Co-teaching, Dr. Craig Pinello, The State of Special Education. Over 50 presenters will participate in the 27 break-out sessions which will include topics such as technology, co-teaching and inclusion, vocabulary instruction, reading, early childhood, and transition for students with disabilities. The symposium will conclude with a dessert bar! To register for the symposium <https://vclد2019.eventbrite.com>.

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# GRADUATE RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENT DAY 2019

MORE THAN 80 GRADUATE STUDENTS FROM OVER 21 DEPARTMENTS TOOK PART. BELOW AND ON THE NEXT PAGE, YOU'LL FIND A SAMPLE OF THE ENERGY TO BE FOUND. BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR MORE PHOTOS AROUND THE UNIVERSITY, BUT ALSO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE NEXT. THE BOOKLET IS AVAILABLE ON THE FRONT PAGE OF OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.ODU.EDU/GRADUATESCHOOL.COM](http://WWW.ODU.EDU/GRADUATESCHOOL.COM).



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# GRADUATE RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENT DAY 2019 (CONTINUED)

POSTERS WERE JUDGED BY A PANEL SPANNING MULTIPLE COLLEGE AND DEPARTMENT BACKGROUNDS. THE TOP THREE WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE NEXT GRADUATE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU NEXT YEAR AT THE NEXT GRADUATE RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENT DAY CONFERENCE IN 2020.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING FIRST AUTHORS WHOSE POSTERS PLACED IN A JUDGING COMPETITION: CORTNEY ARMITANO (1ST), HARMONY MARTELL (2ND), AND CHRISTINA ESPADA (3RD). THE FOLLOWING FIRST AUTHORS RECEIVED HONORABLE MENTION: MAHESH BANDA, ANTHONY CAPPIELLO, MICHAEL ECHEVARRIA, SHELBY LONG, AND HANNAH TWIDDY.

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## GRADUATE SOCIAL

On Monday, March 25, the Graduate School introduced the new Graduate & Professional Learning Commons with a social, as part of the Graduate Student Appreciation Week. This week was from March 18 to March 25 and culminated with Graduate Research Achievement Day. This new commons room is open to graduate students and accessible through use of a prox card. If you need an exclusive, quiet place to study and relax on campus, this is the place to be. Multiple move-able desks are available for use. For access, please send an email with your name and UIN to Missy Barber at MBarber@odu.edu. Stay tuned: Prox card access will soon be available.



## FREE ORAL CANCER SCREENING

# Is a killer hiding right under your nose?

### April is Oral Cancer Screening Month!

Each year in the U.S. alone, approximately 53,000 people are newly diagnosed with oral cancer; about half those diagnosed will not survive more than five years. The good news is that a dental hygienist can see or feel the precancerous tissue changes which might lead to a cancer. The examination takes only 3 to 7 minutes of your time. Historically associated with tobacco, studies now show that HPV16, a sexually transmitted virus, is the fastest growing cause of oral cancers in the U.S. Oral cancer patients are increasingly young, healthy, nonsmoking individuals. Everyone over the age of 18 should be screened annually. The visual and tactile exam is free, painless and quick.



## ODU Dental Hygiene Care Facility

# Free Oral Cancer Screening

**3 minutes that could save your life!**

**Date:** Month of April

**Time:** Morning and afternoon appointments available

**Location:** 4608 Hampton Blvd. Health Sciences Bldg.

**Contact:** 757-683-4308 for appointment and free screening

**Together we can make a difference. Be part of the change®**  
Please visit: [www.oralcancer.org](http://www.oralcancer.org)



[odu.edu/graduateschool](http://odu.edu/graduateschool)



## PHOTOS FROM THE LIGHTNING TALKS

On March 21, fellow graduate students Lily Kunda, Kristina Harrison, Rebecca John, Molly Long, Harmony Martell, and I shared a bit of our research with the general public at the Science Pub Lightning Talks at O'Connor Brewing Company. Respectively, these brief, but informative talks covered Black celebrities driving conversations on civil rights through the ages and today, acculturation in business and how it benefits the economy, the struggles facing refugee mothers, depression faced by pregnant mothers and means to address it, coral bleaching in the midst of global warming and how we may address it, and bioprinting in cancer research and avenues in which we may treat and prevent cancer. Be on the lookout for more electrifying talks in the future.



## CEPE 2019: RISK & CYBERSECURITY | MAY 28-30 2019 | NORFOLK, VA



ODU is hosting a major international conference in the interdisciplinary field of Computer Ethics on May 28–30, and we have set up a poster session for ODU students doing related research.

Graduate students doing work relevant to Computer Ethics, including closely related fields like Information Ethics and Engineering Ethics, are encouraged to submit a 100 word abstract of their research to [dwittkow@odu.edu](mailto:dwittkow@odu.edu) for consideration for inclusion in this poster session. Work may be practical, empirical, theoretical, or social-critical, and may be based within any discipline. Abstracts should be received by April 22nd.

Presentation gives you the opportunity to engage in conversation with and get feedback from internationally-prominent scholars of computer ethics and engineering ethics, (2) experience with presentation in a professional conference, and (3) a nice CV line.

More information, including the conference program, is available here: <https://sites.wp.odu.edu/cepe2019/program/>. All faculty and students are invited to register to attend the conference. The registration rate for students is especially low and includes participation in all conference sessions, the Networking Reception (Tuesday, 5/28), the Conference Dinner (Wednesday, 5/29), and three lunches. For any questions about this opportunity, or about the conference, please email D.E. Wittkower at [dwittkow@odu.edu](mailto:dwittkow@odu.edu).

## ABOUT

Find Graduate School News Online at: [www.odu.edu/graduateschool](http://www.odu.edu/graduateschool), as well as updates on our Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter pages.

ODU doctoral student, Xavier-Lewis Palmer, compiled and edited this newsletter with help from Dr. Robert Wojtowicz, Dr. Bryan Porter, Missy Barber, Genenieve Conwell, and Courtney Nishnick in the Graduate School.

If you have an idea, event, news, or anything otherwise notable that you would like to share, contact Xavier-Lewis at [xpalmer@odu.edu](mailto:xpalmer@odu.edu).



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