**Texas Tech Graduate School Honors High-Quality Theses and Dissertations**

Texas Tech University’s Graduate School is proud to announce the 2015 awards that recognize the quality of work displayed in several theses and dissertations of graduate students.

The Graduate School also will nominate 1st place dissertation award winners to the [Council of Graduate Schools](http://www.cgsnet.org/cgsproquest-distinguished-dissertation-award) as part of its annual CGS/ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award competition to recognize an outstanding dissertation that represents original work and makes unusually significant contributions to the discipline being considered for that year.

In odd numbered years, the Graduate School recognizes work in biological life sciences and humanities and fine arts. Even years will recognize math, physical sciences and engineering and social sciences.

Students are nominated by their faculty members for this cash award. Helen Jones Foundation funding contributed to make these awards possible.

This year’s winners are:

**Biological and Life Sciences**

* 1st place Master’s Thesis – Aakriti Sharma in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences. “Characterization of Soils via Portable X-ray Fluorescence Spectrometer.” *Nominated by Dr. David Weindorf.*
* 2nd place Master’s Thesis – Cody Sultenfuss in the Department of Animal and Food Sciences. “A Novel and Inexpensive Semen Thawing Device Designed to Improve Efficiency in a Production Agriculture Environment.” *Nominated by Dr. Samuel Prien*
* 1st place Doctoral Dissertation – Sanaz Shafian in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences. “Estimation of soil moisture status in the Texas High Plains using remote sensing.” *Nominated by Dr. Stephen Maas.*
* 2nd place Doctoral Dissertation – Matthew Van Landeghem in the Department of Natural Resources Management. “Environmental Factors Regulating Toxic Blooms of Golden Algae (Prymnesium Parvum) and their Effects on Fisheries Resources.” *Nominated by Dr. Reynaldo Patino.*

**Humanities and Fine Arts**

* 1st place Master’s Thesis – Tiffany Gonzalez in the Department of History. “Chicana Politics: Maria Cardenas and La Raza Unida Party, 1935-1993.” *Nominated by Dr. Julie Willett.*
* 1st place Doctoral Dissertation – Michael Palmer in the Department of English. “Baptizing the Dead: Creative Nonfiction Essays.” *Nominated by Dr. Dennis Covington.*
* 2nd place Doctoral Dissertation – Heath Wing in the Department of Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures. “States of Exception on American Frontiers: Biopolitics, Violence, and Nation in Martin Fierro, Os Sertaes, and Blood Meridian.” *Nominated by Dr. John Beusterien.*

For more information on these awards: [donna.rogers@ttu.edu](mailto:donna.rogers@ttu.edu)