



# **SIUE Graduate School Presents Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation Awards**

by Doug McIlhagga  
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EDWARDSVILLE – The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Graduate School announced Patrick Ayres, Mary Pearson, PhD, and Roya Mazrouei as the recipients of the Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation Awards and honorable mention award, respectively. Recipients were recognized at the Graduate School Awards Reception on Oct. 29 and received a \$500 cash prize.

The Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation Awards are designed to recognize a master's student's thesis and a doctoral student's dissertation that have been identified as outstanding among all of the theses and dissertations completed in the previous academic year.

Ayres is the recipient of the School's 2019 Outstanding Thesis award for his master's thesis, "Embattled Conservatism: Hamilton Gamble and Conservatism in Civil War Missouri." His thesis committee was formed by the Department of Historical Studies' Erik Alexander, PhD, associate professor and co-director of graduate studies; Jason Stacy, PhD, professor; Bryan Jack, PhD, associate professor; and Buddy Paulett, PhD, associate professor.

Ayres' research examined the early political career of Hamilton Gamble, Missouri's Civil War governor from 1861-1864. Throughout his thesis, he argues that a distinct Western identity and conservatism shaped Gamble's political identity in the 1840s and 1850s.

"Patrick's thesis is exceptionally researched, including far more original research than is typically expected of a history master's thesis," said Alexander, committee chair. "His research makes a significant contribution to an emerging historiographical literature on the history of conservatism in the 19th century as a distinct political ideology."

Ayres' thesis was also recognized by the Missouri Historical Society as the recipient of the 2019 Lewis E. Atherton Prize. Currently, Ayres is pursuing a PhD in the department's cooperative historical studies program with SIU-Carbondale.

Pearson is the recipient of the School's 2019 Outstanding Dissertation Award for her doctoral dissertation, "Teacher and Administrator Beliefs and Expectations of School Exclusion in Six Midwestern Alternative Schools." Her dissertation committee consisted of the Department of Educational Leadership's Tianlong Yu, PhD, professor; Alison Reeves, PhD, educational administration program director; and the Department of Psychology's Elizabeth Mainz, PhD, professor.

For her dissertation, Pearson conducted a mixed-methods study to understand why teachers and administrators continue to use exclusionary discipline despite growing evidence of such practices' ineffectiveness.

"Mary's study is significant in terms of implications for practice and policy," said Yu, thesis advisor. "The rich and informative findings, and her insightful analysis of them

provide a much-needed guidebook for both practitioners and policy makers as they think about the persistent ‘problem’ of student discipline, revise current policies, and make fundamental changes that are difficult but needed.”

Pearson currently serves as the principal at Journey School, serving districts within the Region III Special Education Cooperative.

Lastly, Mazrouei has been chosen as the University’s 2019 Outstanding Thesis Award Honorable Mention recipient for her master’s thesis, “Development of Impedance-Based Biomimetic Biochemical Sensors for Detection of Foodborne Pathogens for Food Safety.” Her thesis committee was comprised of the Department of Mechanical Engineering’s Kamran Shavezipur, PhD, assistant professor; Keqin Gu, PhD, department chair; and Serdar Celik, PhD, professor and graduate program director.

Mazrouei’s research used microelectromechanical systems (MEMS) technology to develop miniaturized sensors for detection of chemicals and biomarkers in aqueous solution/suspension at extremely low concentrations.

“The detailed analysis of Roya’s research model was done for the first time, and the results of her work have led to new directions and further fundamental study of the electrochemistry and diffusion process in biochemical sensors,” said Shavezipur, thesis advisor, who accepted the award on Mazrouei’s behalf.

Additionally, Mazrouei’s work has been featured in three conference presentations and one journal publication, and contributed to a provisional patent filed in 2018. Presently, she works as a researcher at Stanford Medicine of Stanford University.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River’s rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 13,000.