



## News Release

**For Immediate Release: December 7, 2017**

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### **Winners of 2017 CGS/ProQuest® Distinguished Dissertation Awards Announced**

*Awards recognize outstanding research by graduates in  
the fields of Biological and Life Sciences & Humanities and Fine Arts*

Washington, DC – The Council of Graduate Schools / ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Awards, the nation’s most prestigious honors for doctoral dissertations, were presented to Chad Johnston and Leif Fredrickson during the Council’s 57th Annual Meeting award ceremony. Dr. Johnston completed his PhD in 2016 at McMaster University in Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences, and Dr. Fredrickson received his PhD in 2017 from the University of Virginia in History.

Bestowed annually since 1982, the awards recognize recent doctoral recipients who have already made unusually significant and original contributions to their fields. ProQuest, an international leader in dissertation archiving, discovery, and access, sponsors the awards and an independent committee from the Council of Graduate Schools selects the winners. Two awards are given each year, rotating among four general areas of scholarship. The winners receive a certificate, a \$2,000 honorarium, and funds for travel to the awards ceremony.

“The Distinguished Dissertation Awards recognize the significant contributions young scholars make in their disciplines,” said CGS President Suzanne T. Ortega. “Dr. Johnston and Dr. Fredrickson’s work demonstrates the value and impact of graduate education to the world.”

“These are significant contributions to research on issues that are both timely and important to our communities,” said Austin McLean, director, ProQuest Scholarly Communication and Dissertations Publishing, “They are great exemplars of the groundbreaking work that is produced at universities. Speaking on behalf of all of us at ProQuest, we’re honored to help acknowledge and disseminate this research.”

The 2017 Award in Biological and Life Sciences was presented to Dr. Johnston for his dissertation, *New Techniques Facilitate the Discovery and Study of Modular Microbial Natural Products*. The rise in antibiotic resistance is a serious threat to modern healthcare. Increasing resistance is rendering our current antibacterial arsenal useless at a time when almost no new antibiotics are being developed. In his doctoral thesis, Johnston pioneered new techniques to use new big data analytics and computer

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automation to reveal these new antibiotics, providing tools that are poised to dramatically increase the rate of drug discovery and push back the tide of antibiotic resistance. Dr. Johnston is currently a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Dr. Fredrickson received the 2017 Award in Humanities and Fine Arts for his dissertation, *The Age of Lead: Metropolitan Change, Environmental Health, and Inner City Underdevelopment*. Using lead hazards as a case study to explore the relationship between metropolitan development, environmental health, and social inequality, Fredrickson shows how suburbanites and suburban development benefited from lead-related technologies not shared by those in the inner city, and the costs of lead pollution from these technologies were imposed disproportionately on inner-city residents. Fredrickson examines how one element, lead, linked the environment, metropolitan expansion, the state, and capitalism over the course of a century, providing a window into the tradeoffs that shaped the lives of millions.

More information about the CGS / ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award is available at [www.proquest.com/go/scholars](http://www.proquest.com/go/scholars) or at [www.cgsnet.org](http://www.cgsnet.org).

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**About the Council of Graduate Schools** ([www.cgsnet.org](http://www.cgsnet.org))

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of approximately 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. The organization's mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through advocacy in the federal policy arena, research, and the development and dissemination of best practices.

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