April 21, 2020

**Fall 2020: New Upcoming Graduate Inclusion and Access Scholars**

The Office of Graduate Education is pleased to announce that Graduate Inclusion and Access Scholarships (GIA) have been awarded for 2020-2021. The GIA Scholarship seeks to support the growth and development of an inclusive, thriving graduate community at George Mason University. This scholarship, awarded on a competitive basis, is available to first-generation college students from underrepresented groups who are incoming doctoral degree students and have demonstrated financial need.

**Muneeba Azam** is currently finishing her M.A. in Criminology, Law & Society (CHSS) and will begin the doctoral program in the Fall. Her research interests delve into policing, mental health, racial disparities, and social inequality. She has contributed to multiple research projects and hopes to use her research and writing to advocate within the criminal justice community and encourage others from underrepresented populations to enter the field.

**Jehad Halawani** will enter the Education Ph.D. program (CEHD) this Fall with a focus on international education. She taught science and coordinated STEM curriculum for 10 years in Palestine and the United States and is currently a teacher and volunteer Dean of Students in Fairfax County. Jehad holds both a M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction studies from Mason and will continue her research in order to reach her goal of an experimental gifted school in Jerusalem, where minority Palestinian children receive equal educational opportunities.

**Rafael E. Hernandez** graduated summa cum laude from Virginia Commonwealth University and will be entering the doctoral program in Clinical Psychology (CHSS). Rafael hopes to use his degree to reduce inequities in healthcare and advocate for ethnic minorities. While at Mason, he is looking forward to mentoring and supporting first-generation undergraduate students. He enjoys mountain biking.

**May Santiago** is currently an adjunct professor at Mason as well as at other institutions and will begin the Cultural Studies Ph.D. program (CHSS) in the fall. May holds an M.F.A. in Entrepreneurial Digital Cinema from the University of Central Florida. She looks forward to contributing to currently underrepresented scholarship within genre cinema and connecting with others that have similar goals.

These GIA Scholars will receive a $25,000 (nine-month) stipend, tuition support, summer funding opportunities, and subsidized graduate health insurance. The four students will join our three current Mason GIA Scholars awarded funding in previous years. For more information about this and other Graduate Education awards and scholarships, please visit our [website](#).