

2025 Graduate Student Representative (GSR) Slate of Candidates

[Listed alphabetically by last name/surname]

Autumn Martin

Miruthula Queen Anbu

Autumn Martin is a third-year doctoral candidate in the Sociology Department at the University of Louisville.

Vision for NASSS: Being a graduate student can be an overwhelming experience. The need to keep up with the daily program requirements and adventuring to conferences can be intimidating, especially as a graduate student without prior conference experience. I had the opportunity to attend NASSS back in November 2023. It was a wonderful experience, and they had many opportunities to network. As a graduate student representative, I want to help continue this momentum while catering to graduate student experiences. Having the graduate student panels and *Take a Student to Lunch is essential*. It offers graduate students like me a supportive area to learn from each other and other academics with more experience. I would like to continuously work on these areas to promote this academic arena for future graduate students.

Qualifications for Office/Leadership Experience: As a PhD student, I have worked with the University of Louisville's graduate department to promote a better experience for graduate students. In 2023, I served on the NASSS UNDRIP and Political Advocacy Committee. On the UNDRIP committee, I helped advocate for a more inclusive NASSS experience that aligns with UNDRIP's mission. In 2023, I also served as a delegate for SWS (Sociology of Women in Society) at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67). I listened to speakers on a global level on current issues surrounding women and reported back to SWS. In 2022 I did a summer fellowship with the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), where we looked at preexisting data collect at CIIS to examine queer student's experiences in the higher education setting.

Summary of Publications/Presentations: I attended NASSS for the first time in 2023. I presented with fellow graduate student Jennifer Snelling and professor Dr. Roberto Fernández Morales. We presented a paper looking at how martial arts, specifically Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and Aikido, have been used for trauma healing. We are currently working on the manuscripts from this study for publication. Below, I have outlined the presentations that I have participated in during my graduate career.

PhD

- Mid-South Sociological Association (MSSA) - Paper Presentation (2022)
- International Association of Maternal Action + Scholarship (IAMAS) - Paper Presentation (2023)
- Gender, Work & Organization Conference (GWO2023) - Paper Presentation (2023)
- American Sociological Association Annual Meeting (ASA 118th Annual Meeting) – Roundtable (2023)
- North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS) – Paper Presentation (2023)

Graduate

- Mid-South Sociological Association (MSSA) Paper Presentation (2021)
- Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS) Roundtable Presentation (2022).
- College of Liberal Arts Scholars Day Graduate Presentation (MTSU) (2022).
- Women's Symposium Flash Talk Speaker (Vanderbilt University) (2022)

Miruthula Queen Anbu is a second-year masters student in the School of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the Queen's University.

Vision for NASSS: During my first NASSS conference, I began to understand why other graduate students in my cohort were eager to be present and share their work with this community. NASSS provides a vital space to engage critically with sport scholarship, exchange diverse perspectives, and build meaningful global connections. The NASSS graduate student experience is unique—it is a space where emerging scholars can feel supported, celebrated, and inspired. It's where we can be curious, ask critical questions, learn, unlearn, and hold space for one another to make mistakes while learning how we can do better for our communities. For me, NASSS is a vessel that transports ideas and community toward a hopeful future. If elected as a Graduate Student Representative, I would be committed to enhancing the accessibility, visibility, and inclusivity of the student experience. Specifically, I would aim to introduce and expand initiatives that support marginalized and underrepresented voices in sport sociology, including BIPOC and international graduate students. Expanding on the impactful 'Take a Student to Lunch' program, I would introduce a 'Grad Scholar Spotlight Series'—a digital platform designed to showcase student research, amplify their voices, and foster year-round connections beyond the annual conference. As the tide changes, both politically and socioculturally, I want to help establish decolonial safety measures and create a Decolonial Safety Toolkit, supported by the shared teachings of Indigenous peoples, whose Land allows for NASSS to foster spaces for meaningful engagement. Additionally, I would continue promoting mentorship initiatives, such as peer-led sessions by upper-year graduate students, to create spaces where students feel welcomed, valued, and supported throughout their journeys.

Qualifications for Office/Leadership Experience: As a South Asian scholar whose ancestral wisdom is deeply connected to Water, and whose research explores the intersections of race, water and boat sports, and settler colonialism, I bring a unique perspective on advocacy, representation, and community building. I graduated from the University of Waterloo with a BA in Recreation & Sports Business, minoring in event management. During my time there, I supported the Dean's Applied Health Sciences department as an event assistant coordinator, managing both in-person and virtual events, including: Bell Let's Talk Day, AHS Recognition Reception, 3-Minute Thesis, AHS Grad Formal, March Open House, Grad Class Send-Off, Virtual Trivia Night, and Speed Networking Events. Throughout my academic journey, I have demonstrated a strong commitment to fostering inclusive spaces, both in research and practice. I have served as a research assistant on multiple sport and equity-focused projects, including: *Racial Inequities in Canadian Amateur and High-Performance Sport* (with the Canadian Olympic Committee, SIRC, and RBC Training Grounds); Collaboration with the *Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada* on safe sport initiatives; and a current member of NASSS' *UNDRIP Alignment Committee*. Since 2022, I have also served as the Graduate Student Representative for the Sociocultural Department, Indigenous Students Liaison, Graduate Student Arts Rep, and DEI committee member at Queen's University. In these roles, I work with graduate student communities to promote meaningful engagement, advocate for wellness, and foster solidarity and shared growth among students.

Summary of Publications/Presentations: My research examines the socio-cultural politics of sport, with a particular focus on water and boat sports, settler colonialism, and storytelling with racialized communities. In 2022, I presented my undergraduate paper on Active Integration and Segregation in Safe Third Spaces, which focused on centering BIPOC experiences and decolonizing recreational and sport frameworks. In 2023, I hosted, both NASSS' and my first Water sport based session. In Chicago, I presented my preliminary findings from my MA thesis on dragon boat racing and cultural appropriation. In 2024, I published "[#LandBack also means #WaterBack: \(Re\)visiting Sports on Stolen Waterways](#)" in *Engaging Sports*, offering insight into how settler colonialism operates in Water spaces. As I continue to honour my South Asian ancestors' teachings and Water wisdom through my work, and my work with UNDRIP to decolonize and transform spaces, I am committed to support and work alongside the NASSS graduate student community in Seattle and Calgary as one of your student representatives!