PROGRAM

Welcome: Dr. Roberta Mason-Gamer, Director of Graduate Studies

Presentation of Awards Department Faculty

♦ Award for Excellence in Teaching

Nolan Bielinski, BioS 101, Biology of Populations and Communities
Brigitte Browe, BioS 100, Biology of Cells and Organisms
Monica Farfan, BioS 104, Life Evolving
Laura Manning, BioS 484, Neuroscience I
Matthew McCary, BioS 331, General Ecology Laboratory
Robin Mores, BioS 221, Genetics Laboratory
Hilmarie Muñiz-Talavera, BioS 325, Vertebrate Embryology
Alyssa Ray, BioS 220, Mendelian and Molecular Genetics
Yanina Tovpeko, BioS 351, Microbiology Laboratory
Nicholas Waszczak, BioS 223, Cell Biology Laboratory

♦ Award for Research Achievement

Beth Drewniak
Brook Herman
Victoria Hunt
Eun Sun Kim
Jane Kim
Gosia Kokoszka
Mark Lloyd
David Lowenstein
Angenee Milton
Yanina Tovpeko

♦ Award for Excellence in Research Mentorship

Sebnem Ece Ekşi
Madhu Sukumar

Reception
GRADUATION LIST
The following students were awarded degrees in 2014-2015:

- Erika Arnold PhD
- Fatih Arslan PhD
- Janet Backs PhD
- Amy Belaire PhD
- Sonny Bleicher PhD
- Marinés de la Peña Domene PhD
- Amber Ismael PhD
- Farida Khan PhD
- Michael Kierny PhD
- Emi Kuroiwa MS
- Douglas Lynch PhD
- Andrea McGinley PhD
- Danielle Orozco-Nunnely PhD
- Kalpana Ramakrishnan PhD
- Alexandra Silva MS
- Kelly Varga PhD
- Leena Walters Williams PhD
- Emily Wyskiel PhD
- Zi Yang PhD

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
The following students passed their preliminary exams in 2014-2015:

- Kevin Gorman
- Mark Lloyd
- David Lowenstein
- Laura Manning
- Matthew McCary
- Daniel Pers
- Leo Venegas
- Dawson White

ENTERING CLASS OF 2014-2015

- Elsa Anderson Ecology and Evolution
- Frank Anderson Ecology and Evolution
- Dina Beeler-Muscat Neurobiology
- Nolan Bielinski Ecology and Evolution
- João Guimarães Capurucho Ecology and Evolution
- Stephanie Chancellor Ecology and Evolution
- Adit Chaudhary Ecology and Evolution
- Yang Chen Molecular, Cell and Developmental Biology
- Natalia Cortés-Delgado Ecology and Evolution
- Jason Davlantes Ecology and Evolution
- Kristin Gallik Molecular, Cell and Developmental Biology
- Sneha Gummuluri Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology
- Amanda Henderson Ecology and Evolution
- Zhongjiao Jiang Neurobiology
- Sehar Khosla Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology
- Wenping Li Neurobiology
- Jennifer McGinnis Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology
- Avinash Nidhadala Gururaja Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology
- Yesha Patel Neurobiology
- Seema Sheoran Neurobiology
- Alexis Smith Ecology and Evolution
- Todd Widhelm Ecology and Evolution
- Huini Wu Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology
- Rui Xiong Neurobiology
GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

We wish to thank our graduate students for their invaluable contributions to the Department’s undergraduate teaching efforts:

Frank Anderson  Zane Deliu  Yanyang Li  Andrew Raduski
Daniel Applegate  Ece Eksi  Wenping Li  Karolis Ramanauskas
Deanna Arsala  Monica Farfan  David Lowenstein  Saleel Raut
Heidi Bai  Michelle Frack  Meg Malone  Alyssa Ray
Adam Baker  Kristin Gallik  Laura Manning  Michael Ricketts
Deebika Balu  Maryam Gharehaghaji  Liliama Marquez  Braulio Rodriguez
Arjun Balyan  Kevin Gorman  Kellen Marshall  Shelagh Rodriguez
Katherine Barkus  Brian Grewe  Ashley Martin  Alexis Smith
Dina Beeler-Muscat  Sneha Gummuluri  Cristian Martinez  Madhu Sukumar
Nolan Bielinski  Crystal Guzman  Christopher McCallough  Steven Sullivan
Elena Blanc Betes  Paul Huber  Matthew McCary  Boriana Tchernookova
Brigitte Browe  Nicole Inniss  Jennifer Mcginnis  Yanina Tovpeko
Joao Guimaraes Capurucho  Zhongjiao Jiang  Robin Mores  Xin Wang
Stephanie Chancellor  Imrose Kauser  Hilmarie Muniz-Talavera  Nicholas Waszczak
Adit Chaudhary  Sehar Khosla  Avinash Nidhadala Gururaja  Todd Widhelm
Yang Chen  Eun Sun Kim  Hilary Osborne  Huini Wu
Ji In Choi  Jane Kim  Jason Palagi  Emily Wyskiel
Lorna Cohen  Gosia Kokoszka  Yesha Patel  Rui Xiong
Nicholas Crouch  Alena Kozlova  Daniel Pers  Chen Yang
Jason Davlantes  Emi Kuroiwa  Honghu Quan  Sarah Zinn

FELLOWSHIPS

Elsa Anderson, University Fellowship
Joao Guimaraes Capurucho, CAPES ‘Science without Borders’ Scholarship
Abdel Halloway, NSF Fellowship
Amanda Henderson, Illinois Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation ‘Bridge to the Doctorate’ Fellowship
Percy Jinga, Fulbright Scholarship
Cristian Martinez, Abraham Lincoln Graduate and Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois Fellowships
Joy Peplinski, Boren Fellowship
Lillian Perez, Illinois Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation ‘Bidge to the Doctorate’ Fellowship
Sandra Troxell-Smith, NSF Fellowship
Leon Venegas, USDA Fellowship
Dawson White, NSF Fellowship
PUBLICATIONS

Ecology and Evolution:

Mohammad Abu Baker (Ph.D., Spring 2011)

Janet Backs (Ph.D., Fall 2014)

Amy Belaire (Ph.D., Summer 2014)

Beth Drewniak

Charles Flower (Ph.D., Spring 2013)
Flower, C.E., M. Brikha, J. Dalton, K.S. Knight and M.A. González-Meler. To treat or not to treat, ash canopy condition shows the way: effectiveness of emamectin benzoate tree injections for ash tree protection from emerald ash borer. Urban Forestry and Urban Greening: in press.

Brook Herman

Victoria Hunt

Basil Iannone (Ph.D., Spring 2013)

Eun Sun Kim

Mark Lloyd


David Lowenstein

Sarah O’Brien (Ph.D., Spring 2010)

Alexandra Silva

Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology:

Arjun Balyan

Zane Deliu

Farida Khan (Ph.D., Fall 2014)

Michael Kierny (Ph.D., Fall 2014)

Jane Kim

Gosia Kokoszka
Yanyang Li  

Andrea McGinley (Ph.D., Summer 2014)  

Angenee Milton  

Danielle Orozco-Nunnelly (Ph.D., Spring 2015)  

Kalpana Ramakrishnan (Ph.D., Summer 2014)  

Yanina Tovpeko  

Zi Yang (Ph.D., Fall 2014)  

Neurobiology:

Shankar Ramachandran (Ph.D., Spring 2014)  

Kelly Varga (Ph.D., Summer 2014)  

Leena Walters Williams (PhD., Summer 2014)  
PRESENTATIONS

Ecology and Evolution:

Anna Czupryna
Czupryna, A., L. Faust, J. Brown, M. Bigambo and S. Mehta, “Free-roaming domestic dogs in rural villages near Serengeti National Park, Tanzania” (oral presentation), Rabies in the Americas Conference, Cancun, Mexico, October 2014

Beth Drewniak
Drewniak, B. and U. Mishra, “Soil organic carbon response to cultivation in the Community Land Model” (poster), RCN (Research Coordination Network) FORECAST Workshop: Representing Soil Carbon Dynamics in Global Land Models to Improve Future IPCC Assessments, Breckenridge, CO, June 2014

Mason Fidino

Crystal Guzmán

Victoria Hunt

David Lowenstein
Lowenstein, D.M., “Meet the neighbors: bees and wasps in urban gardens and their implications for agriculture” (invited seminar), Lincoln Park Zoo Seminar Series, Chicago, IL, October 2014
Lowenstein, D.M., “Insects in urban agriculture” (invited panel presentation), Urban Agriculture in Chicago Research Panel, Advocates for Urban Agriculture, Chicago, IL, November 2014
Lowenstein, D.M. and E. Minor, “Evaluating parasitoids and biological control of Brassica pests in urban food production sites” (presented paper), Entomology 2014, Portland, OR, November 2014
Lowenstein, D.M., “Natural enemies and biological control of lepidopteran Brassica pests in urban agriculture” (invited presentation), Organic Agriculture Research Symposium, La Crosse, WI, February 2015

Margaret Malone

Kellen Marshall
Marshall, K., “Entry-level ecologists: a look into the City Colleges of Chicago for translating the discipline of ecology into employment for students of color” (oral presentation), 99th Annual Meeting of the Ecological Society of America, Sacramento, CA, August 2014
Marshall, K., “Connecting with urban farmers and the growing in Chicago survey” (oral presentation), Association of Urban Agriculturists, Chicago, IL, November 2014
Marshall, K., “The socio-ecological history of Chicago’s African American population” (oral presentation), Environmental Education SIG Conference, Chicago, IL, April 2015
Marshall, K., “The social location of water” (panel presentation), Water after Borders Panel, UIC, Chicago, IL, April 2015

Cristian Martínez
Martínez, J.C., “Chicago wilderness arthropod monitoring programs: past, present, and future” (invited pres.), Chicago Wilderness, Aquatic Task Force & U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago, IL, June 2014
Martínez, J.C., “Insects, spiders, and mites, oh my: an introduction to entomology and its use in restoration and educational efforts in Chicago wilderness” (oral pres.), Wild Things Conference, Chicago, IL, January 2015

Andrew Raduski

Karolis Ramanauskas
Ramanauskas, K. and B. Igic, “The evolutionary history of plant T2/S-type ribonucleases” (oral presentation), 2015 Midwest Ecology and Evolution Conference, Bloomington, IN, March 2015

Michael Ricketts

Sandra Troxell-Smith
Troxell-Smith, S.M., “So what was with all those buckets? Zoo foraging ecology and the effect of management decisions on okapi behavior” (oral presentation), Mammals West Team Meeting 2014, Brookfield Zoo, Brookfield, IL, 2014
Troxell-Smith, S.M., “Zoo foraging ecology: Animals reveal their preferences” (poster), 2014 Association of Zoos and Aquariums Annual Conference, Orlando, FL, September 2014

Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology:

Deanna Arsala
Arsala, D. and J. Lynch, “Whence the womanizer? A transcriptomic approach to sex determination in Nasonia” (poster), 5th Meeting of the European Society for Evolutionary Developmental Biology, Vienna, Austria, July 2014
Arsala, D. and J.A. Lynch, “A transcriptomic approach to sex determination and the maternal-to-zygotic transition in Nasonia” (poster), Midwest Drosophila Meeting, Allerton, IL, November 2014; also given at the 56th Annual Drosophila Research Conference, Chicago, IL, March 2015

Lorna Cohen
Cohen, L. and J. Lynch, “Dissecting the genetic basis and evolution of form using haploid wasps” (poster), 5th Meeting of the European Society for Evolutionary Developmental Biology, Vienna, Austria, July 2014; also given at the Midwest Drosophila Meeting, Allerton, IL, November 2014 and the 56th Annual Drosophila Research Conference, Chicago, IL, March 2015
Zane Deliu
Deliu, Z., M. Dixon Rojas, K. Elseth, M. Aqil, M. Bassiony, Benjamin Vesper and J.A. Radoserovich, “Head and neck cancer cell lines adapted to high nitric oxide levels consistently up-regulate lipocalin 2” (poster), 9th International Conference of Anticancer Research, Sithonia Greece, October 2014

Sebnem Ece Ekşi
Ekşi, E., C. McCallough, A. Kopp, O. Barmina and T. Orenic, “Identification of an evolutionarily-conserved CRM that recapitulates Scr expression in the primordia of the T-row and sex comb bristles of T1 leg” (poster), 56th Annual Drosophila Research Conference, Chicago, IL, March 2015

Kevin Gorman
Gorman, K., “Using phage-display to isolate non-overlapping binding pairs” (poster), US HUPO (Human Proteome Organization) 11th Annual Conference, Tempe, AZ, March 2015

Brian Grewe

Jane Kim
Kim, J., Z. Lipatova, U. Majumdar and N. Segev, “Ypt1 localization and effect on the Golgi” (poster), UIC Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics Retreat, Chicago, IL, 2014 (Jane received 1st place award for poster presentation.)

Gosia Kokoszka
Kokoszka, G. and B. Kay, “Mapping protein-protein interactions with phage-displayed combinatorial peptide libraries and alanine-scanning” (poster), 12th Annual CBC Symposium: Protein Engineering: From Computers to Cells to Clinic, Chicago, IL, October 2014; also given at US HUPO (Human Proteome Organization) 11th Annual Conference, Tempe, AZ, March 2015

Yanyang Li

Ashley Martin
Ashley, M., F. Sancar and J. Richmond, “Regulation of the nicotinic acetylcholine receptor ACR-16” (poster), C. elegans Topic Meeting: Neuronal Development, Synaptic Function and Behavior, Madison, WI, July 2014; also given at the Michigan C. elegans Meeting, Grand Rapids, MI, April 2015

Hilmarie Muñiz-Talavera
Muñiz-Talavera, H. and J. Schmidt, “The mouse hydrocephalus gene JHY plays a role in ependymal cell differentiation” (poster), 27th Annual Mouse Molecular Genetics Conference, Pacific Grove, CA, October 2014

Daniel Pers
Pers, D., “Evolution of the molecular composition of the Nasonia dorsal-ventral patterning GRN” (poster), 5th Meeting of the European Society for Evolutionary Developmental Biology, Vienna, Austria, July 2014; also given at the Midwest Drosophila Meeting, Allerton, IL, November 2014

Honghu Quan
Quan, H. and J. Lynch, “Next-generation approaches to understanding the evolution of insect germline” (poster), 5th Meeting of the European Society for Evolutionary Developmental Biology, Vienna, Austria, July 2014; also given at the 56th Annual Drosophila Research Conference, Chicago, IL, March 2015
Alyssa Ray  
Ray, A., L. Williams and D. Featherstone, “Ambient extracellular glutamate modulates synaptic strength at hippocampal CA3-CA1” (poster), Chicago Chapter of the Society for Neuroscience 2015 Scientific Meeting, Chicago, IL, March 2015

Madhu Sukumar  
Sukumar, M., “Dev1 may regulate polarization of the yeast pheromone receptor by modifying plasma membrane composition” (seminar), Midwest Yeast Meeting, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, September 2014

Yanina Tovpeko  
Tovpeko, Y. and D.A. Morrison, “Regulation of the alternative sigma factor $\sigma^x$ during transformation in Streptococcus pneumoniae” (invited presentation), 58th Annual Wind River Conference on Prokaryotic Biology, Estes Park, CO, June 2014  
Tovpeko, Y. and D.A. Morrison, “Mutations in $\sigma^A$ bypass the comW requirement for genetic transformation in S. pneumoniae” (invited presentation), 2014 Molecular Genetics of Bacteria and Phages Meeting, Madison, WI, August 2014  
Tovpeko, Y. and D.A. Morrison, “Mutations in $\sigma^A$ bypass the comW requirement in S. pneumoniae” (poster), 21st Annual Midwest Microbial Pathogenesis Conference, Chicago, IL, September 2014

Leo Venegas  
Venegas, L., K. Pershad, M. Kierny, I. Flores, O. Bankole, N. Shah, S. Khosla, H. Wu and B. Kay, “Generation and multimerization of affinity reagents that recognize phosphopeptides” (poster), US HUPO (Human Proteome Organization) 11th Annual Conference, Tempe, AZ, March 2015

Sarah Zinn  

Neurobiology:

Deebika Balu  

Dina Beeler-Muscat  

Emily Church  
Church, E.C., E. Hamid and S. Alford, “Monte Carlo simulation of transmitter release and receptor activation at CA1 glutamatergic synapses supports modified fusion dynamics as a mechanism of 5-HT1BR inhibition (dynamic poster presentation)”, Neuroscience 2014, Washington, DC, November 2014

Laura Manning  
Manning, L. and J. Richmond, “Investigating the synaptic role of the G$\alpha_s$ pathway” (poster), C. elegans Topic Meeting: Neuronal Development, Synaptic Function and Behavior, Madison, WI, July 2014; also given at the Michigan C. elegans Meeting, Grand Rapids, MI, April 2015
Liliana Marquez
Marquez, L. and A. Alfonso, “C. elegans core and sex-specific neurons involved in sexual attraction behavior are altered in their differentiation in hlh-3 mutant males” (poster), C. elegans Topic Meeting: Neuronal Development, Synaptic Function and Behavior, Madison, WI, July 2014

Saleel Raut
Raut, S., “hlh-3 encodes two Achaete/Scute like protein isoforms with different functions” (poster), C. elegans Topic Meeting: Neuronal Development, Synaptic Function and Behavior, Madison, WI, July 2014

GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, HONORS AND AWARDS:

Elsa Anderson: UIC Sustainability Fund Committee Grant, 2015
Frank Anderson: UIC LAS Bodmer International Travel Award
Deanna Arsala: UIC Provost’s Award for Graduate Research, Spring 2015
Stephanie Chancellor: UIC LAS Bodmer International Travel Award
Emilly Church: UIC Provost’s Award for Graduate Research, Fall 2014
Anna Czupryna: International Companion Animal Management Coalition Student Travel Award, to attend and present at the International Dog Population Management Conference, Istanbul, Turkey, March 2015; UIC Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Graduate Student Research Award, April 2015
Percy Jinga: Chicago Consular Corps Scholarship, 2014-15
David Lowenstein: The Ceres Trust Graduate Student Grant, 2014-15; UIC Chancellor’s Graduate Research Fellowship, 2013-15; UIC Elmer Hadley Graduate Research Award, 2014-15
Margaret Malone: UIC LAS Bodmer International Travel Award, 2014; Sigma Xi Grant-in-Aid of Research, 2014
Cristian Martínez: Third Prize for ‘I see you: Using spider diversity to study woodland restoration efforts’, UIC Graduate College ‘Images of Research’ Competition, 2014
Matthew McCary: UIC Elmer Hadley Graduate Research Award, 2014-15
Hilmarie Muñiz-Talavera: FASEB MARC Travel Award, to attend and present at the 27th Mouse Molecular Genetics Meeting, Pacific Grove, CA, October 2014
Andrew Raduski: UIC Elmer Hadley Graduate Research Award, 2014-15
Karolis Ramanauskas: UIC Biology Colloquium ‘Best Teaching Assistant’ Award, 2015
Alexis Smith: UIC Sustainability Fund Committee Grant, 2015
Yanina Tovpeko: Honorable Mention, UIC Excellence in Undergraduate Mentoring Award for Graduate Students, 2015
Sandra Troxell-Smith: American Society of Mammalologists Grant-in-Aid; NSF GROW (Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide) Travel Award, June 2014
Dawson White: DNA Discovery Center Research Grant, May 2014 and Museum Collection Spending Fund Award, January 2015, Field Museum of Natural History; UIC Provost’s Award for Graduate Research, Spring 2015
Sarah Zinn: UIC Provost’s Award for Graduate Research, Spring 2015
OTHER RESEARCH, TEACHING AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES:

Deanna Arsala: Served as social media representative for ‘Expanding Your Horizons’, Chicago Chapter, which holds a symposium to encourage young women to pursue STEM fields, 2014-2015; judge, Chicago Area Undergraduate Research Symposium (CAURS), April 2015; served on the UIC BioS Career Seminar Committee

Dina Beeler-Muscat: Judge, Lincoln Park High School Science Fair, 2014

Emily Church: Co-organizer, Citizens’ Climate Lobby-Chicago North


Zane Deliu: BGSA Events Coordinator

Beth Drewniak: Served as liaison between World Urban Database Access Portal Tool Organizing Committee and Argonne National Laboratory to secure funding for WUDAPT Workshop, Dublin, Ireland, July 2014; Led break-out session on ‘ACME (Accelerated Climate Modeling for Energy) Interface to IAs and/or IAVs’ (invited), Climate-Energy Workshop, Washington, DC, October 2014

Sebnem Ece Eksi: Served as department representative to UIC Graduate Student Council and on the committee for the BioS Graduate ‘Trouble-Shooting’ Club

Imrose Kauser: Served as department representative to UIC Graduate Student Council

Alena Kozlova: Committee member, BioS Graduate ‘Trouble-Shooting’ Club

David Lowenstein: Served as member of UIC Chancellor’s Committee for Sustainability and Energy; served as project advisor to high-school-teacher participant in Bradley University’s STEM Teach and Lead Program; gave outreach presentation (invited) “Wild bees in the city” to Windy City Beekeepers, Chicago, IL, January 2015

Margaret Malone: Gave presentations at Shedd Aquarium High School Marine Biology Program, July 2014; Field Museum ‘Scientist on the Floor, February 2014; Field Museum Members’ Night, March 2014

Kellen Marshall: Gave presentations on connecting with urban farmers and fields in ecology and natural resource sciences to the Association of Urban Agriculturists, November 2014 and Gary Green Drinks, April 2015; published articles in The Chicago Defender, Ebony, and the ESA Graduate Student Blog

Cristian Martinez: Mentored undergraduate researchers at UIC; mentored a high school teacher in Bradley University’s STEM Teach and Learn Program; assisted Dr. Karin Nelson in development of Animal Behavior Laboratory course, BioS 336; curated and digitized UIC’s Greenberg and Hamilton insect collections; attended Undergraduate Mentor Workshop at the Organization for Tropical Studies, San Jose, Costa Rica, April 2015; taught two workshops in UIC’s campus-wide TA orientation/training, 2014; graduate student volunteer for UIC’s Emergency Medical Technician class practical exams; guest speaker for outreach programs for local grammar and high school students.

Christopher McCallough: Served on the Research Committee for and as Graduate Student Council representative to the UIC Senate

Matthew McCary: Gave invited presentation “Life as a young scientist: school, teaching, and research”, Science Alumni Seminar, North Central College, Naperville, IL, April 2015; gave guest lecture in Soil Ecology course, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, February 2015

Hilmarie Muniz-Talavera: Served as BGSA Vice-President and on the UIC BioS Career Seminar Committee; organized a time and stress management seminar for the department’s graduate students; graduate mentor to incoming minority graduate students; judge for Goudy and McCutcheon public elementary schools’ science fairs; volunteer, ‘Expanding Your Horizons’, Chicago Chapter, which holds a symposium to encourage young women to pursue STEM fields

Daniel Pers: BGSA Treasurer/Secretary

Alexis Smith: Volunteer, Chicago Bird Collision Monitors and Field Museum

Madhu Sukumar: Mentored an IIT M.S. student and high school student researchers

Yanina Tovpeko: Advisor for UIC Chapter of Alpha Phi Omega, a co-ed community service fraternity; served on the UIC BioS Career Seminar Committee

Leo Venegas: BGSA President; served on the UIC BioS Career Seminar Committee

Dawson White: Mentored undergraduate researchers at UIC and co-presented poster with mentee at UIC Student Research Forum