



Undergraduate Biology Program University of Kansas

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E-News

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Dear Alumni and Friends of the Undergraduate Biology Program,

Wishing you a Happy New Year from Haworth Hall! I encourage you to read about some of the exciting work going on in our department and with our undergraduate students as we take this time between semesters to reflect on the accomplishments of the fall semester.

KU Biology students continue to excel not only within our program, but across the university, in the community, and even nationally. Scholarship competition is in the spring semester, and I encourage you to visit our [Awards & Scholarships website](#) for a list of past recipients and future notification of awards, many which are funded by our alumni!

Providing a leading-edge education for students is a top priority, and we are pleased with the [human anatomy lab renovations](#) made in Haworth Hall this summer. With newly renovated facilities, we are able to offer the human anatomy lab to more students, nearly meeting the demand. With technology and curriculum upgrades, we are providing students with an enhanced anatomy learning experience.

In this issue, we highlight [two longtime dedicated staff](#) who continue to manage the laboratory courses for our students. Rena Rouse and Trudy Foster have played an important role in creating an active and safe learning environment for students in physiology and microbiology labs. Also, we are pleased to introduce you to our newest staff members who, likewise, play key roles in [Undergraduate Biology](#).

As always, we value our alumni and we celebrate your successes. You can share your news and stay connected by submitting your information online. We want to keep you current on what is happening in our department and let you know about upcoming events.

Dr. Greg Burg
Director

New and Improved Anatomy Lab

To keep up with increased student demand for human anatomy and to give our students a leading edge in biology education, an improved lab was opened in Haworth Hall at the start of the Fall 2014 semester. The anatomy lab was improved with structural renovations and technology changes, and an enhanced curriculum, including online learning, was implemented.

Structural Renovations and Technology Upgrades

The upgrades to the approximately 1900 square foot lab were completed last summer. The renovation included new epoxy floors, lights, sinks and plumbing, and the removal of a wall. With additional space, we are able to house two more cadavers for teaching and 45 more students were able to enroll last fall.

The technical upgrades to the lab included the installation of 46" monitors and a new mobile camera that allow students to watch dissections. Also, a projector and screen were purchased to use for pre-lab anatomy instruction. "KU is now able to train a larger percentage of future dentists, nurses, physician assistants, physical therapists, and other health professionals," said Dr. Jennifer Weghorst, assistant director for the undergraduate biology program.

Curriculum Enhancement

The renovated lab also came with some changes in the way anatomy is taught. Dr. Victor Gonzalez, lecturer and coordinator of the anatomy labs, is enhancing the anatomy curriculum by incorporating digital technologies as well as hands-on activities into the course. "Students will have access to online multi-media resources that will assist their learning and complement the lab work. Also, during the in-class activities, they will have the opportunity to immediately apply their anatomical knowledge," Gonzalez said.

"We receive feedback that our students are well prepared for their next step, and our anatomy education is a large part of that," said Dr. Greg Burg, director of the undergraduate biology program. "We want to continue to ensure that our educational outcomes meet industry expectations."



Dr. Victor Gonzalez speaks with students in the anatomy lab.

Biology Students Receive BioScholarships

KU BioScholarship Program

Since 1998, KU's BioScholarship Program has provided renewable scholarships to outstanding undergraduate biology students thanks to the generosity of alumni and friends. BioScholarships are awarded to incoming high-ability students who have demonstrated a commitment to scholarship and who plan to participate in research with a biology faculty member and pursue departmental honors in biology. They are encouraged to avail of the many opportunities KU offers for academic and pre-professional development, such as being undergraduate teaching assistants and participating in the Biology Majors Advisory Committee (BMAC) and various other student organizations.

BioScholars 2014

We welcomed six new BioScholars in 2014. **Michael Cory** (Smiley–Gilligan Family BioScholarship) is from Wichita, KS and is pursuing a bachelor's in biochemistry. **Chloe Adams** (Howieson BioScholarship) is from Shawnee, KS and is a biology major. **Marilyn Barragan** (Howieson BioScholarship) is from Olathe Kansas and is pursuing a biology degree. **Elise Base** (Robert and Lillian Bell BioScholarship) is from Norman, OK and is majoring in biology. **Paige Hansen** (Howieson BioScholarship) is from Brookings, SD and is a biology major. **Zachary "Zach" Grant** (Howieson BioScholarship) is from Wichita, KS and is pursuing a bachelor's in microbiology. We are honored to welcome such outstanding new BioScholars and look forward to getting to know them over the next four year

BioScholars 2013

Seven students were accepted into the BioScholars Program in 2013. **Alexandra "Alex" Arvanitakis** (Howieson BioScholarship) is from Overland Park, KS and is majoring in biology. **Emily Binshtok** (Howieson BioScholarship) is from Overland Park, KS and is a biochemistry major. **Mohana Chakrabarti** (Howieson BioScholarship) is from Manhattan, KS and is a biology major. **Abigail "Abby" Fields** (Howieson BioScholarship) is from Minneapolis, MN and is pursuing a degree in ecology & evolutionary biology. **Aadil Khan** (Howieson BioScholarship) is from Overland Park, KS and is a biology major. **Sanjay Parashar** (Howieson BioScholarship) is from Leawood, KS and is a biology-cell biology major. **Jennifer Kaberline** (Howieson BioScholarship) is from Lee's Summit, KS and is pursuing a degree in biology-genetics. We are pleased to continue to support these BioScholars throughout their four years at KU.

We are also proud of our BioScholar alumni who are teachers, surgical residents, medical students, pharmacy students, veterinary medicine students, post-doctoral associates, and Ph.D. students. We are grateful for the contributions by our alumni and friends that enable us to support outstanding undergraduate biology students in the KU BioScholarship Program.

Biology Students Win Distinguished Awards

Students Recieve Campus Awards

University Scholars

We are pleased at the representation of undergraduate biology students in the University Scholars Program. Each year, the 20 outstanding second-year students from various disciplines across campus are selected for the program. These students are chosen on the basis of their academic success, demonstrated commitment to education, and evaluations. Students receive a scholarship and complete a semester-long University Scholars Seminar course.

Seven biology students were selected as University Scholars in 2013/14: **Bahar Barani** (biochemistry), **David Dimachkie** (biology major), **Rachel Lietz** (biochemistry), **Adelle Loney** (microbiology), **Teale Muir** (microbiology), **Jenny Stern** (biology major), and **Jessica van Loben Sels** (microbiology).

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2014/15 University Scholars who are biology majors are **Emily Lenherr** (biology) and **Daniel Pham** (biochemistry).

Global Scholars

Two biology students, **Aidan Dmitriev** and **Abby Fields**, were among the 15 sophomores at the University of Kansas recently chosen as Global Scholars. Students are chosen based on their academic achievements and interest in global studies. Recipients receive a \$1000 scholarship to be used towards a study abroad program. Students will also participate a weekly seminar, Community in a Global Context. Aidan Dmitriev is from Lawrence, Kansas and is pursuing a microbiology degree. Abby Fields is from Minneapolis and is majoring in ecology and evolutionary biology.

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ExCel Award Recipient

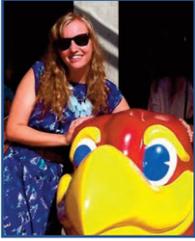


Graham Naasz, a biology major, is the recipient of the 2014 Excellence in Community, Education and Leadership (ExCel) Awards at the University of Kansas. Graham was chosen from ten finalist and the two winners were announced at the KU Homecoming game. The ExCEL Award is given to one male and one female student based on their academic achievements, as well as their involvement at KU and the Lawrence community. Graham is active on campus as a member of the Student Endowment board and Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity, and is involved in the community, as well.

As a recipient of the award, Graham will receive an annual \$500 award and collaborate with KU's Student Involvement and Leadership Center to plan the Blueprints Leadership Conference next spring.

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Excel Award Finalist



Allyson Briggs was one of the ten finalist for the ExCEL award. She is a biochemistry major with a minor in leadership studies. She has been involved in many activities including: Alternative Breaks (as co-director and on the executive board); resident assistant at Lewis Hall; and a rank leader for the Marching Jayhawks. She is in the Mortar Board Honor Society and was in the first class for the Kansas Women's Leadership Institute.

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Hall Center Scholars



Sebastian Schoneich, a senior in biochemistry and philosophy and **Leigh Loving** (pictured below), a senior in genetics were among the ten undergraduate students selected as Hall Center Scholars for 2014/2015. These students are chosen for their academic achievements and involvement at KU. The Hall Center Scholars are given the opportunity to interact with the outstanding individuals who are participating in the Hall Center Humanities Lecture Series.

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Students Receive National Recognition Rhodes Scholar Finalist



Leigh Loving, a senior majoring in genetics, was selected as finalist for the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship. Leigh is also a 2014/15 Hall Center Scholar.

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Udall Scholarship Honorable Mention

Jenny Stern, an ecology and evolutionary biology major from Lawrence, received an honorable mention for the prestigious Udall Scholarship. The Udall Foundation awards 50 scholarships and 50 honorable mentions to students nationwide who are dedicated to an environmental career. Her undergraduate research is with Professor Joy Ward. Jenny is also a 2013/14 University Scholar.

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Focus on Two Dedicated Staff Members



Rena Rouse will soon celebrate 37 years of service at KU in the undergraduate biology program. Rena is the lab coordinator in the physiology labs and manages the preparation of labs for Human Physiology and Mammalian Physiology.

Rena received a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology from Kansas State University in 1974, and worked for Fish and Game for a year following graduation conducting a study on quail habitat. After that study ended, she worked at a wholesale aquarium supply dealership in Topeka while applying to the State of Kansas for careers in her field. In 1978 she was hired as a lab coordinator in biological sciences and has since been working with the physiology labs, making certain the laboratories run smoothly and efficiently.

Rena works with a team of graduate teaching assistants and under the direction of Kelly Johnson, lab director. She is responsible for everything from ordering the equipment and supplies to ensuring that the computers in the labs are functioning properly. Over 400 students per year are enrolled in physiology lab courses, and Rena seamlessly coordinates the logistics. She takes pride in providing the students with hands-on learning involving everything from nerve and muscle experiments on frogs to dissection of bovine eyes. One of her favorite experiments is the equilibrium lab where students are spun in the rotating barony chair.

When she is not at KU managing the labs, Rena enjoys gardening, hiking with her dog, and refinishing furniture.



Trudy Foster has been working in the biology department since 1982. She received a bachelor's degree in microbiology from KU, and upon graduation accepted a position in the microbiology department. Trudy is currently the lab coordinator in the undergraduate teaching labs where she uses her strong organizational and planning skills to service six biology labs in introductory microbiology, microbial genetics, immunology, pathogenics, and virology. She prepares the labs for approximately 300 students per semester and ensures the lab instructors have the media supplies needed for experiments. Mindful of budget constraints, she purchases lab supplies with a keen sense of timing in order to receive vendor discounts. She interacts daily with students, faculty, outside vendors, and a team of lab coordinators and graduate students. What she most enjoys about her job is the opportunity to communicate with so many different people.

In her spare time, Trudy enjoys spending time with her husband of 30 years, two children, three grandchildren, and friends. She is an active leader and volunteer in her church and she is involved in various activities that benefit the community.

Incoming Undergraduate Biology Program Staff



Suzanne Scales is the new events specialist and she is working with the Undergraduate Program, as well as the two graduate programs, Molecular Biosciences and Ecology and Evolutionary Biology on a variety of projects. She is managing the efforts with the external advisory board, whose members provide support and guidance to the three units. Suzanne started in late May and she comes to our program from the Business School where she spent the last seven years.



Dr. Victor Gonzalez is our new human anatomy instructor. Victor comes from Southwestern Oklahoma State University and is actually returning to KU where he received his doctorate in ecology and evolutionary biology in 2008. Victor started the beginning of August in the renovated lab that now allows the enrollment of 45 more students each semester.



Melissa Meyers is the new lab coordinator in the microbiology labs, replacing Martha West who was a longtime employee and recently retired. Melissa is working with Trudy Foster, lab coordinator, and under the direction of Dr. Funke. Melissa received a bachelor's degree in cell biology in 2010 from KU.



Craig Corstein is the new lab coordinator in introductory biology. His principle responsibility is lab preparation for all of the introductory biology labs for majors and non-majors. Craig is working with Susan Transue, lab coordinator, and under the direction of Julie Campbell, director of undergraduate biology labs. He has a bachelor's in biology and a master's in biology, both from Pittsburg State University.

Dr. Constance Hallberg is the new lab coordinator in the biochemistry labs, replacing Tim West, who held the position for many years and recently retired. Connie will also be assisting with the cell, genetics, and development labs. She holds a bachelor's degree in genetics and development from the University of Illinois. She earned a master's in molecular and cell biology from Indiana University and a doctorate in insect cell biology from Purdue University. Connie knows KU well and has taught biology courses in the past.



Alumni and friends.
We want to hear your news and keep you informed of upcoming events!

Visit us at [online](#) and share your information.

Rock Chalk, Jayhawk!

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