



Bio Buzz Newsletter

Denison University,
Department of Biology

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Final Notes From This Chair



It's apparently springtime at Denison, although it's hard to tell with the unusually chilly weather we have been experiencing so far this April. But signs of spring are everywhere, with the Biological Reserve returning to life, prospective students touring across campus, and classes surging toward the end of the academic year. As I mentioned in our fall newsletter, it has been an exciting year, with the implementation of our new core curriculum. The new entry course, Molecular Biology & Unicellular Life had its first run in the fall, and the second course in the sequence, Multicellular Life, premiered this spring. Although it will take time to

fully assess how well the new curriculum is working, anecdotally we are pleased with how our new courses are going, and we are optimistic that this will prove to be a positive change for the program.

With the year winding down, I thought I would share a few news items. First, we are excited to announce that Dr. Lina Yoo will be rejoining the department in the fall! She has been on leave for the past two years, and we are thrilled that she will be back home on The Hill. Second, we are saddened that Teresa Smit (DU '15) will be leaving her position as a lab preparator, as she begins law school next fall. Best of luck, Teresa, and thanks for all of your contributions to the department! And lastly, this



will be my final column in the *BioBuzz*, as I step down from my position as department chair. It's been an honor and a privilege serving in this role, and I've thoroughly enjoyed communicating with all of our alums via this newsletter. But I have no doubt that we will be in good hands as Dr. Chris Weingart takes over as the new chair this summer!



Peer Mentoring



This spring seniors organized the first Biology Peer Mentoring Panel to address options for the biology major, targeting underclassmen giving an encouraging environment to ask questions of upperclassmen.

They found that many underclassmen are unsure of the opportunities a biology degree has to offer. A small panel of upperclassmen shared their diverse experiences within the biology major, including research experience (on or off campus), internships, and future goals that may or may not include graduate school, and represented the many fields of interest biology has to offer.

Meet our 2016 Senior Fellows



Dory Enright, Lincoln, RI

I am a biology and chemistry double major from Lincoln, RI. For as long as I can remember I have loved science and have always been interested in figuring out just how the world works. Most of all, I have a life-long curiosity about the diversity of animal organisms and the ways in which they interact with both the environment and each

other; I am planning to follow this interest to veterinary school in the fall, with hopes of eventually pursuing a career in comparative biomedical research. My current research is performed in Dr. Monroy's lab, and focuses on the role of the titin protein in muscle activation. In my free time I enjoy reading, baking, and taking long road trips.

Rachel Hoffman, Powell, OH



Inspired by my high school biology classes, I arrived at Denison eager to jump into the Biology major. The first class I took in the department confirmed my passion for biology, and my interest has only continued to grow over the past four

years. My main interests have always been in the realm of genetics, but throughout taking courses in genomics and computational biology I have discovered a new interest in bioinformatics that utilizes my mathematical inclinations as well. I have also appreciated my ecologically oriented courses; I love biology because it encompasses both the global and infinitesimally small.

I have participated in research experiences both

at Denison and off campus; this has motivated my decision to attend graduate school and pursue a career in research. I also had the opportunity to study in Scotland, where I took marine biology. I have also enjoyed being a TA and tutor for the department. One of the best aspects of my time at Denison has been getting to know various faculty members and fellow classmates, and I know I will carry what I have learned from them into all of my future endeavors.

Until I started college, I had always been more of a humanities type of person. Because I thought I should have a specific goal for a career path, I initially planned to go to medical school. So, I chose to major in biology because that's what most pre-med students do. Although I've liked the majority of the classes I've taken in other departments, I've enjoyed my biology classes the most.

It wasn't until I started senior research this past summer that I realized research was way more up my alley than medical school. Now, I plan on eventually going to graduate school, but I'm not sure what I'd like to study. The first upper-level biology course I took was evolutionary biology and I really liked it, but then I took genetics and I really liked that class too, and it just kept going on from there and now I'm not sure what area of biology I'd like to study. But, I know that my experiences in the biology department have prepared me for whatever I end up doing after Denison.



**Leanne Kelley
Newark, OH**



Emily Lamm
St. Petersburg, Russia Pittsburg, PA

Science is my root, the foundation from which I spring into and cultivate my passions. In maintaining a symbiotic relationship between science and the humanities, I've developed a multifaceted and balanced lens. As a Biology major, I've had the privilege of working with incredible faculty, which has allowed me to embrace the interdisciplinary nature of our world. It is because of this foundation that I was able to make a seamless transition into the pursuit of law school. Though an unusual path, the biology curriculum has provided me with a comprehensive and meticulous approach to analysis that I will be able to apply throughout my life. Originally born in St. Petersburg, Russia, my family immigrated to the United States when I was five months old. Since that pivotal move, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania has been my home. My time at Denison has been rich with a vast assortment of engagements. As a member of the varsity cross country and track & field teams, I've found stability in training and competition. I've served as a biology head tutor for the tutoring program and am currently the head tutor of chemistry, a teacher's assistant, as well as a biology, chemistry, and statistics tutor. I'm also the discussion chair of Denison's Leadership Honorary, Omicron Delta Kappa. In past summers I've conducted clinical research in neurotrauma through the funding of Denison's Battelle Science Internship & Research Award, in addition to research in molecular biology, pharmacology, and structural biophysics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. Ultimately, I could not be more grateful for the opportunities that Denison's Biology Department has provided me with and I am truly honored to be a Senior Fellow.

Our Presidential Medalists!



<https://news.denison.edu/2016/04/rewarding-awards/>

Emily and Sarah:

<http://denison.edu/campus/awards/whats-happening/2016-presidents-medalists>

2016 President's Medalists (seated, left to right): Anika Smith, Ashley Bartreau, , **Emily Lamm**, Taylor Kessler-Faulkner, (standing, left to right): Cheyanne Cierpial, McLane Sellars, Patrick Keller, **Sarah Winnicki**, Anna Teye, President Adam Weinberg.



BioBuzz

Though I have always been passionate about environmental conservation and animals (especially birds!), I came into Denison more determined to be a historian than a biologist due to some less-than-ideal experiences in a very conservative high school biology program. However, in Dr. Thompson's Bio 150 class and through Dr. Schultz's advice I learned that my enthusiasm for biology was too great to ignore. By the end of my first semester freshman year I was joyfully pursuing biology classes, service, and research.

The Denison Biology Department became my home away from home. I have had the opportunity to assist my peers as a TA, drop-in Biosphere tutor, and Academic Support and Enrichment Center head tutor. In addition to inspiring me through a suite of classes including Animal Behavior, Ornithology, Population and Community Ecology, and Genetics, the Biology faculty members have allowed me to pursue my own ideas and interests around the department. I have been able to help Newark Girl Scouts with a project about animal migration, lead bird walks for community members, and restore the department's avian study skin collection (a work still in progress). I am particularly grateful for Dr. Schultz's constant mentorship and support as my academic advisor!

Thanks to the encouragement and recommendations of my Denison Biology mentors I had the opportunity to complete three years of off-campus summer research; I spent a summer researching blackbird breeding ecology at The Ohio State's Stone Laboratory and two summers studying the aggregation of Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*) territories in the tallgrass prairies of Kansas State University. My Denison mentors were never far away, of course—Dr. Schultz was always quick to answer questions and provide supportive guidance, Dr. Weingart was patient enough to let me use her lab space and materials to continue my projects during the school year, and Dr. Thompson and Jenny Etz were always there to help me with funding and supply shipping. I am very excited to finish my sparrow research this spring as a senior research project with the help of Dr. Schultz!

My time with the Denison Biology Department has been truly inspirational and I look forward to continuing my work as I become a professional biologist. Next fall I will attend graduate school to research avian breeding biology and (eventually) become a professor of ecology and behavior.

Sarah Winnicki
Medina, OH



**DENISON STUDENTS AND GRADS EARN SIX NATIONAL
SCIENCE FOUNDATION AWARDS**

<http://denison.edu/news-events/press/66340>



“NSF Graduate Research fellows often become life-long leaders that contribute significantly to both scientific innovation and teaching.”

Ted Yachimiak, Dublin, OH



I came to Denison as a Biology major solely for the purpose of going to medical school. After taking a few of the core classes, I realized my passion for the major, as well as for science in general. I've changed my mind so many

times about what I want to do in the future, but I've never changed my mind about going into science. I have an extreme passion for the unknown and I see science as the way to discover the unknown. My particular interests are in microbiology and neuroscience; however, that did not stop me from doing my senior research on frog behavior. If there is a question that can be asked, I want to know the answer.

My current future plans are to take a couple years to work on a project with someone in a research environment, whether it be at a hospital or a university. As someone who is intrigued by all types of science, I feel that I need

to jump in and discover what specifically calls to me.

The Denison biology department has done so much for me. I came in thinking I knew everything there was about biology, but little did I know, I had not even stepped foot into the best parts. I have enjoyed every single moment of my life as a biology major. I have been challenged to my core, but it has done nothing but fuel my passion for science. I know that I will be able to go on to do what I have a passion for because of the Denison biology department.



More 2016 Biology Departmental Awards

http://denison.edu/academics/biology/whats-happening?wh_tag=1187 !

DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

Past issues of the *Bio Buzz* may be found in the Digital Repository:

<http://ohio5.openrepository.com/ohio5/handle/11282/57>



DENISON
UNIVERSITY



New to Talbotan AQUARIUM!



WE HEARD FROM SOME OF OUR QUIETER ALUMS AFTER OUR LAST ISSUE ...WHICH INCLUDED A GREAT PHOTO . . .

Thank you so much for this very interesting newsletter and update. I graduated in Denison 1967, went on to medical school and residency and then practiced pediatric endocrinology for twenty-three years. After leaving the health care field, I have pursued writing and publishing both our town newsletter for eight years and three books with a fourth on the way. Dr. Norris was a tremendous mentor and teacher and I had the opportunity to work for him in his office helping to grade papers. Good luck on your continued work. ~**joan maccracken, MD '67**

Both **Anne (Anne Michener Bell '72)** and I are bio majors from the early 70's. I have to say, it's both great to maintain a sense of the present and troubling to see that our era is now "the archives!" **H. Palmer Bell '73**

Since graduating I obtained my doctorate in physical therapy at Duke University, worked at the Cleveland Clinic and am now at University Hospitals - Case Medical Center in Cleveland, OH. I have specialized in women's and men's health and last year was trained in fertility techniques. Since being trained, 2 women have come to me for infertility, and both those women are currently pregnant! I have an amazing job with a lot of promise, and I am thankful for the skills Denison University has provided for me. - **Jessica J. Jenkins '06**



Thank you for including me. I am now 83, retired in 1998 and from the Dr. Lindsey era. ~**Thomas T. McGranahan, Sr., M.D '53**

Thanks for the great newsletter. The department is rich with good teachers and students.
Susan Taliak Eyre '70

I have been receiving newsletters from the Biology Department for some time and only just thought I could reply. I took my junior year abroad from Denison at the University of Nairobi in Kenya and for my senior research project there, spent several months with a colleague from Oberlin College also on her junior year abroad, following a troop of baboons near the coast. In any case, I have never had an opportunity to go back, until this last Dec when the same colleague and I planned a trip to Rwanda to see the country and of course, the Mountain Gorillas. I am sure I am not the only Denison graduate to do this, but it was a trip of a lifetime for me. So I thought I should at least share some of my photos with you. ~**Debbie Hindle, '71**



Have an update for
our next *BioBuzz*?
biology@denison.edu

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