

School of Integrative Biology Awards Presentation 2025

Awards for:

Undergraduates and Graduate students



SIB Undergraduate Awards



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Robert H. Davis Memorial Award

Sue and Kent Davis established this prize to honor and remember their son Robert. Rob had a wide variety of interests and a desire to help others. This prize is intended to recognize “a student who exhibits significant academic curiosity, is hardworking and motivated... (With) interests outside of academia, such as the arts, sports, politics, or literature and who is generally inquisitive about life. The prize allows a student a summer semester in a research lab related to fields of study in the School of Integrative Biology or organismal biology.



Robert H. Davis Memorial Award



Elijah Becker

I am studying Integrative Biology to enter the field of Conservation and Ecology. Specifically, I hope to work with cetaceans like dolphins or whales. This award helps relieve my family of financial burdens, allowing me to take on internships at the Shedd and participate in an animal behavior lab during the next school year to continue building experience and skills.

Robert H. Davis Excellence Award

Sue and Kent Davis established this award to honor and remember their son Robert. This award supports a student excellence scholarship. The recipient is selected based on academic or research excellence.



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Robert H. Davis Undergraduate Excellence Award



Ben Brosnan

I am currently an undergraduate at UIUC studying for my bachelor's degree in Integrative Biology and a minor in Ecology and Conservation. I am involved in conservation genetics research, specifically helping with research studying the endangered Louisiana Pine Snake. This award along with its generous donation will aid me on my path to continue my academic career using research platforms focused on understanding endangered species and helping in their conservation.

Camp Family Research Award

This award, for graduates of Illinois high schools, was made possible by Bob and Tammy Camp. They met at UIUC as first-generation college students. Bob earned a BS and an MS in Computer Science and Tammy earned a BS in General Biology. Tammy received an MS in Biochemistry at Northwestern University. They recognize that research experience and strong lab skills are important for a successful career in biology. This award helps to provide this opportunity to SIB students.



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Camp Family Undergraduate Student Research + iBio Summer Award



Angel Perez

I am an undergraduate student majoring in Integrative Biology Honors with a minor in Chemistry. I love plants, especially in the context of ecology and their roles in helping maintain the structure of an ecosystem. I plan to attend graduate school to dive deeper into the ecological roles that plants have, especially when it comes to their relationship with microorganisms and their impacts on nutrient cycling. I am currently a part of Dr. Yang's lab, where I help PhD student Natalie Belloso with her work researching the impacts that long-term nitrogen fertilization has on ecosystem-level processes and how these influence plant-microbe interactions.



Morgan Wood

I am studying bluefin killifish and their coloring dependent on social factors. Since killifish are such a great model organism it's always a good thing to continue learning about them. This scholarship will help me run multiple experiments to learn more about bluefin killifish, their color, and social behaviors.

Spyros Kavouras Summer Research Award

Dr. Jerry Kavouras established this award in memory of his father. Dr. Kavouras received his BS in Biology at UIUC in 1995 and his PhD in 2002 from Marquette University. He is currently Professor and Chair of the Biology Department at Lewis University. The award helps support a full-time summer research experience in the lab of an SIB faculty member.



Spyros Kavouras Summer Research Award



Jenaya Wilder

I am a junior, soon to be senior, in the Integrative Biology major. This summer I will be conducting my own independent research project on how heatwaves affect Black Swallowtail butterfly physiology in Alex Harmon-Threatt's pollinator entomology lab. Through this, I hope to be able to better predict how climate change will affect these butterfly populations, and in turn help us improve conservation efforts and advocate for an end to specific causes of global warming. This award is such an honor, and I'm very grateful to have received it!

Robert J. Graesser Summer Internship

Made possible due to the generous donation by Mr. Graesser, a 1973 graduate of Botany. He established this fund for the benefit of future generations of botanists.



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Graesser Summer Internship



Fisher Houston

I'm a sophomore in the Integrative Biology Honors Program currently studying resurrection plants: desiccation tolerant species that can hunker down in drought conditions, sprouting to life once favorable conditions return. I hope to uncover the mechanisms that confer this unique ability, and work towards applying discoveries to inspiring drought-resistant crops or utilizing key molecules to influence human health outcomes. My other research interests include genetics-based investigations into nutrition using the model organism *C. elegans* and using bioanthropology perspectives to contextualize colonial reports of ancient Inca civilization. I hope to use the opportunities afforded by the Graesser Award to gain invaluable experience through involved research and prepare myself for a future of change-making.



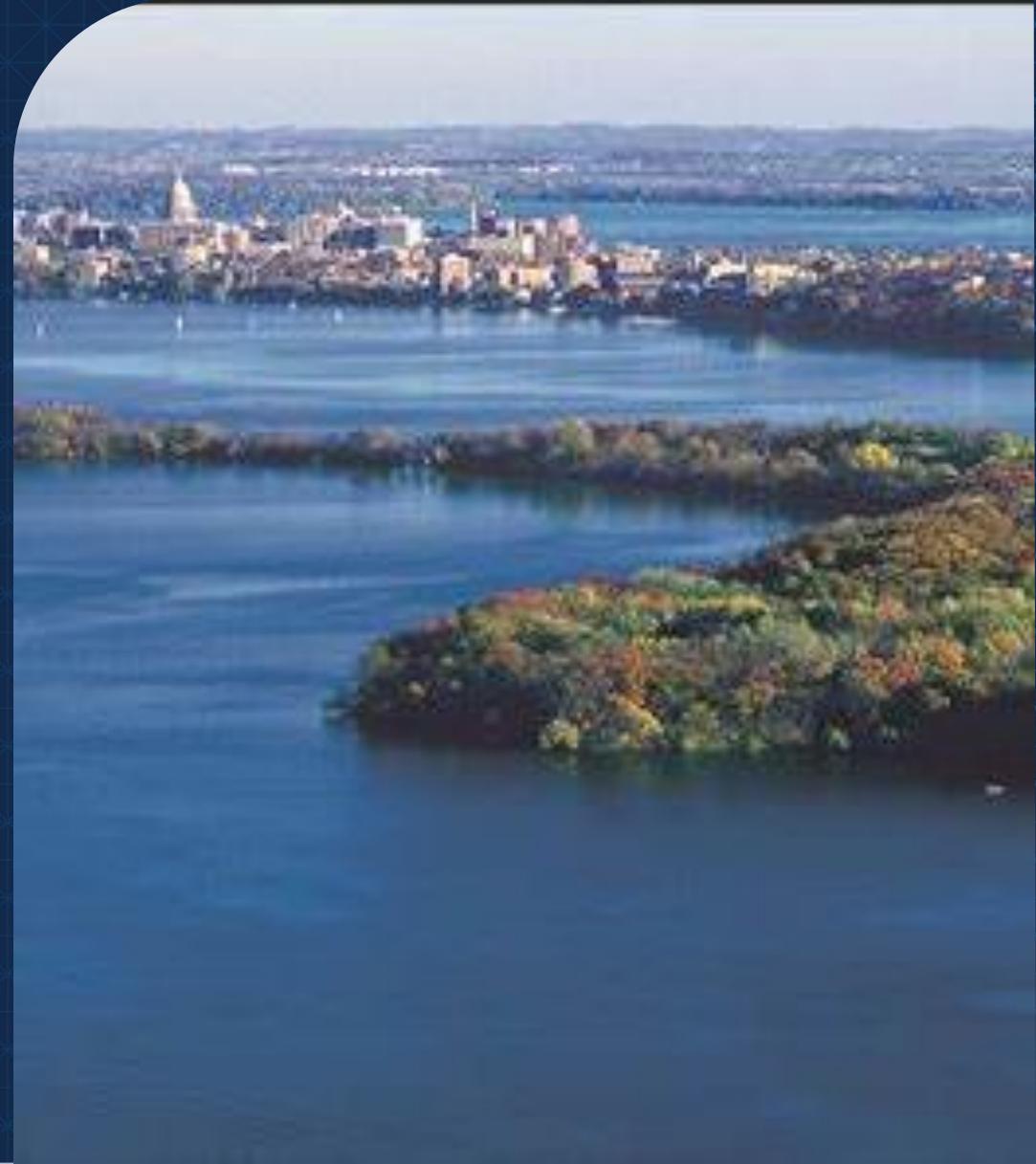
Drew Kim

I'm a junior in the school of integrative biology working in Dr. Brooks lab. I'm currently aiding research in understanding how *Arabidopsis Thaliana* integrates both Nitrogen and CO₂. Additionally, I am personally researching how cis-regulatory elements effect gene expression.

Mulroy Summer Internship

Made possible by a generous
donation from Ms. Maureen Mulroy
for undergraduate research.

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Mulroy Summer Internship



Dishan Gunya

My research investigates how juvenile brood parasites develop social and species-specific behaviors in the absence of conspecific parental care. Using automated radio telemetry, I examine the spatial and social dynamics Brown-headed Cowbirds to understand how juveniles navigate and integrate into a complex conspecific social environment.



Ren Horn

I am currently a junior majoring in integrative biology and minoring in NRES: Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation. This summer, I will be working in Dr. Milton Tan's lab researching how body shape of minnows is correlated to their ecology. With this time in the lab, I hope to be able to present my work and graduate with distinction. Using these funds, I can continue focusing on research and determine if academia is the future career path for me!



Valeria Ocampo

I am a sophomore from Glendale Heights, IL, majoring in Integrative Biology and pursuing an Anthropology minor. I am working towards becoming a biologist to understand the variety of life systems to protect and preserve our environment. This scholarship will graciously support my academic journey, helping to hone my skills in many areas of biology.

*i*Bio Summer Internship

This award will support a full-time (40 hours / week for 10 weeks) summer research experience in the lab of a School of Integrative Biology Faculty member.



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A photograph of a corkboard with a white paper strip pinned to it. The word 'INTERNSHIP' is written on the strip in large, black, hand-drawn, block letters. The corkboard has a textured, brown surface. A blue pushpin is visible at the bottom edge of the white strip.

INTERNSHIP

iBio Summer Internship



Kathleen Apaez

I am currently a sophomore at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign majoring in Integrative Biology with a minor in Chemistry



Ryan Orozco

I am currently an undergraduate at UIUC studying for my bachelor's degree in Integrative Biology and a minor in Ecology and Conservation. I am involved in conservation genetics research, specifically helping with research studying the endangered Louisiana Pine Snake. This award along with its generous donation will aid me on my path to continue my academic career using research platforms focused on understanding endangered species and helping in their conservation.



Angelina Roman-Alcocer

Angelina Roman-Alcocer is a rising senior majoring in Integrative Biology from Lindenhurst, IL. This summer she will be conducting her own independent research on how anthropogenic noise affects male parental care in Red-winged Blackbirds under the guidance of Facundo Fernandez-Duque in the Bell Lab. Roman-Alcocer hopes the findings will contribute valuable information to conservation strategies for birds breeding in noise-impacted habitats. She believes gaining deeper insights into these impacts are essential, as it helps us become more aware of our effects on the environment. Being awarded this internship is such an honor and she can't wait for the summer to begin!

AAP Award

LAS, in partnership with SIB, provides
summer research experience to
undergraduate students



AAP Award



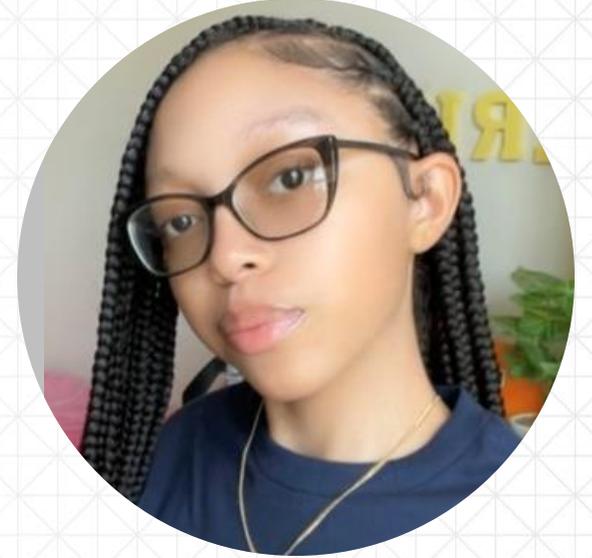
Juliana Alvarez

Juliana Alvarez is a freshman undeclared in the College of LAS, hoping to declare a major in Integrative Biology with a minor in Child Health and Well Being. She was recently accepted into the Access and Achievement Program Summer Research Fellowship where she will spend 10 weeks researching and working in the Phil Anderson lab.



Jazmin Fuentes

My name is Jazmin Fuentes and I am a first-generation freshman at UIUC. My hometown is biology and my major is Integrative Biology.



Erin Miller

Erin Miller is a junior majoring in Integrative Biology at UIUC. This summer, she will be working full-time on research in Dr. Matt Doremus's lab, studying symbiotic relationships between arthropods and bacteria. She's excited to learn more about these host-microbe interactions and contribute to research exploring how symbionts shape arthropod biology and reproduction.

AAP Award



Jesus Montes

My name is Jesus Montes, I'm a freshman majoring in Integrative Biology. My main interests are the physiology and anatomy of living organisms, especially humans! Learning how the mechanisms of our and other organisms' bodies work gets me ecstatic, and I wish to contribute to the ever-evolving understanding of mind-body connection. In my free time, I love playing electric guitar and honing my skills. I look forward to my current research opportunity and any future opportunities to come!



Alin Ortiz-Hernandez

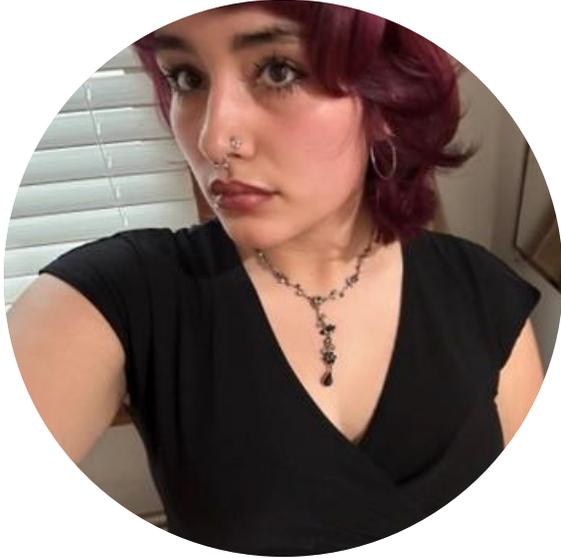
Alin Ortiz-Hernandez is currently a sophomore majoring in molecular and cellular biology on a pre med track. From Woodstock, IL.



Karol Penuelas

My name is Karol and I am a freshman in the college of LAS. I have an interest in Earth sciences and chemistry, specifically in climate change. I hope that by working in the Yang Lab I will learn what it means to be a researcher. In my spare time, I love to watch movies and review them.

AAP Award



Yvette Reyes Caracheo

My name is Yvette Reyes Caracheo, and I am from Chicago, Illinois. I am a current undergraduate freshman here at UIUC with majors in Integrative Biology and Spanish and I will be working alongside Dr. Dolezal this summer on his studies with bees!



Nicole Sanchez

I'm a sophomore from Joliet, Illinois, currently studying Biology. I got accepted to work in the Burgess Lab this summer!



Samantha Sanford

AAP Award



Belicia Tuffour

My name is Belicia Tuffour. I am a sophomore majoring in chemistry. I enjoy drawing and painting outside of my academics.

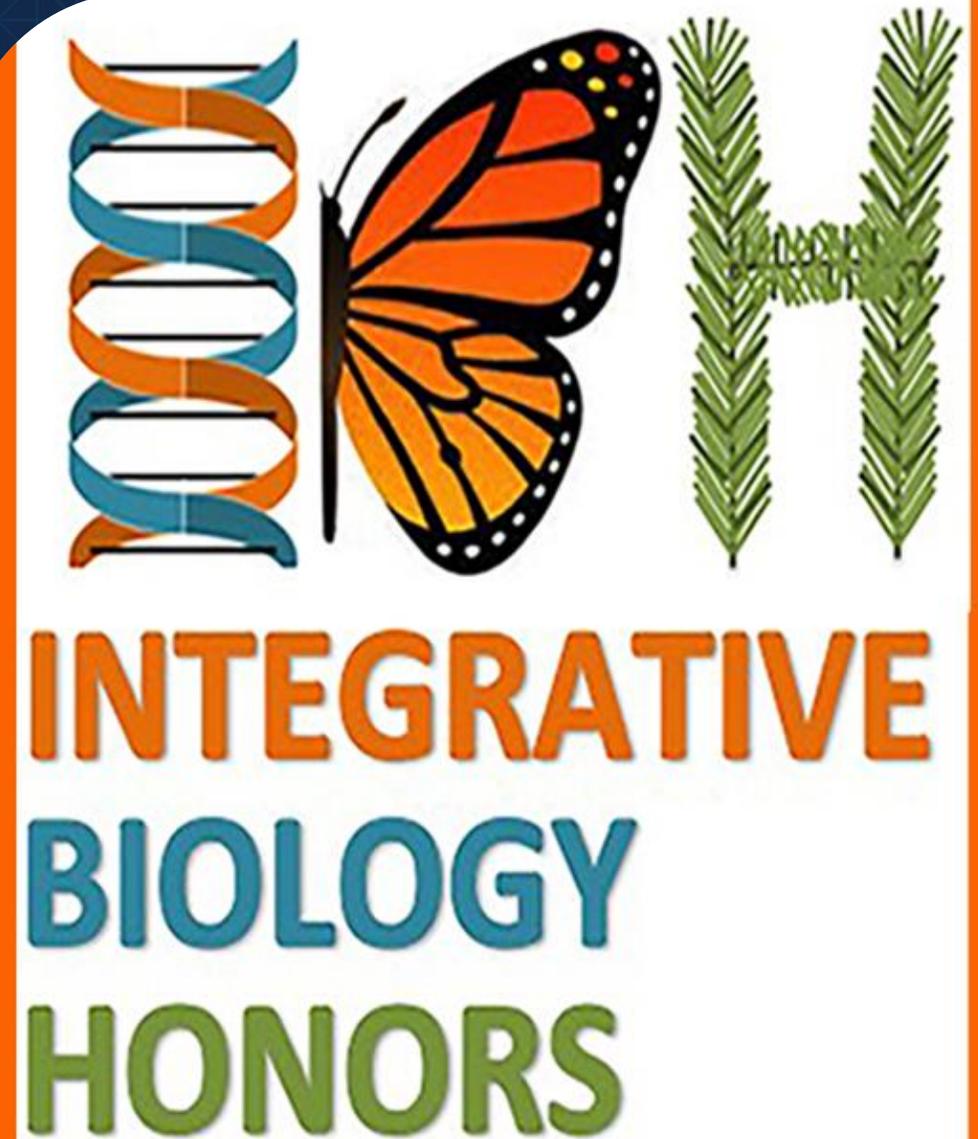


Yongyan Zhou

Hi, I'm Yongyan! I'm a sophomore from Chicago majoring in Integrative Biology with a minor in Chemistry. I'm passionate about medicine and currently exploring a path toward becoming a doctor—possibly in anesthesiology or pathology. I'm excited to continue learning, growing, and making a meaningful impact in healthcare. Outside of academics I really like reading fantasy books that allow me to get immersed in a fictional world.

Oliver J. Bell Merit Scholarship in Integrative Biology

Oliver J. Bell graduated summa cum laude and with distinction from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in 1989 with concentrations in Biology Honors and chemistry. This award supports academic excellence and intellectual achievement in all its forms. The recipient is chosen on merit and must be an incoming junior in the Honors Biology Program in the fall.



Oliver J. Bell Merit Scholarship in Integrative Biology



Amartya Nalluri

I am a sophomore majoring in integrative biology honors and minoring in statistics. As a part of the Heath Lab, I am always learning more about the relationship between different legume plants and rhizobacteria in the soil. I am so grateful for this scholarship, which will allow me to dedicate more time to my research lab and begin working on my own plants in the greenhouse. I also hope to take more time to learn more about science communication and outreach, which I know are vital for continuing productive research.

Judy Willis Scholarship

This award is made possible by a generous donation by faculty in recognition of Dr. Judy Willis (currently a professor emeritus at the University of Georgia). Prior to teaching at UGA, she was a UIUC professor in the Biology Honors program for many years. This award recognizes an outstanding junior in the IB Honors program.



Judy Willis Scholarship in Integrative Biology



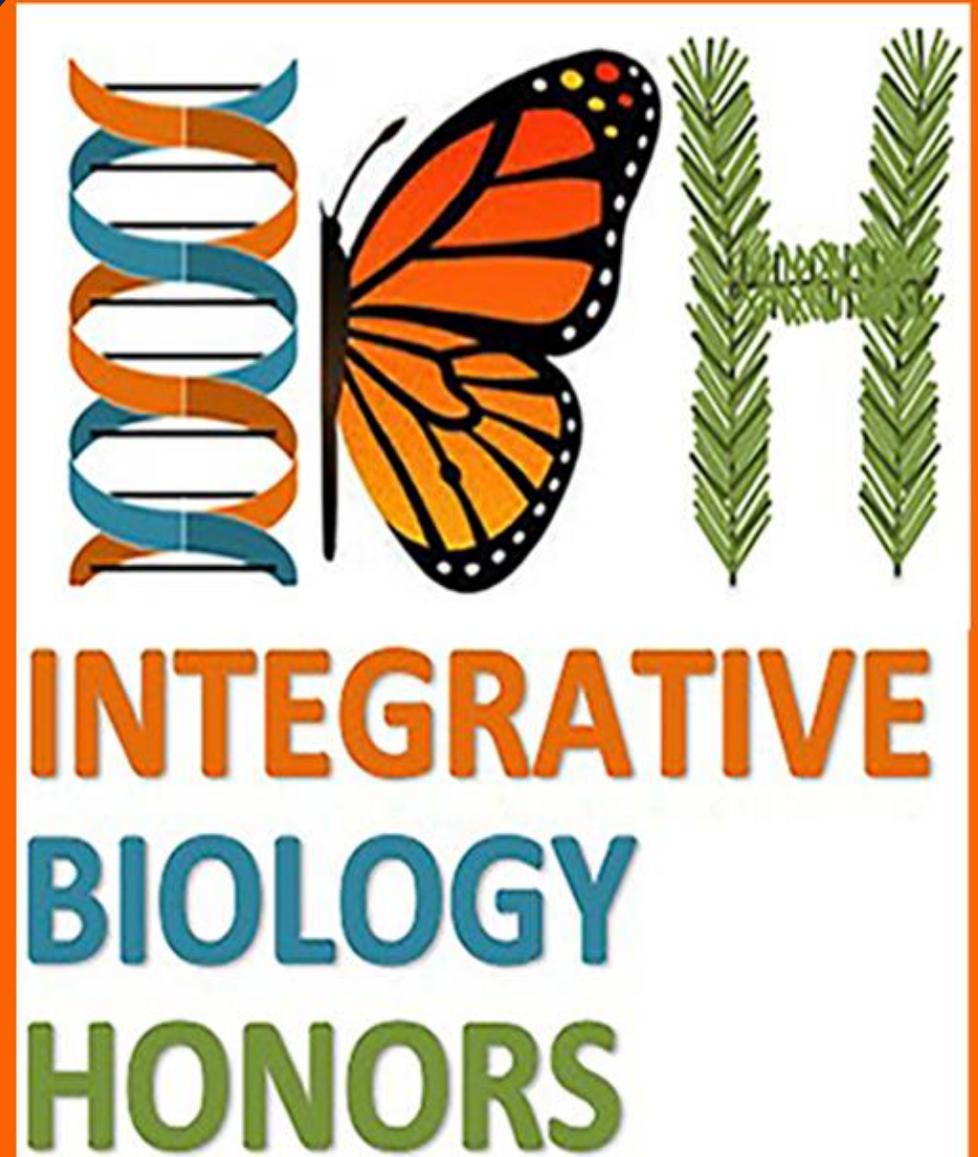
Arted Gjata

My name is Arted Gjata and I am a junior double majoring in Integrative Biology Honors and Chemistry. I plan on attending medical school after I earn my undergraduate degree with the hopes of becoming a physician within the field of internal medicine. I do research on the genetic modification of sorghum plants to create novel phenotypes. The goal of the research is to create strains which have increased crop yield/biomass in an effort to combat the energy crisis which our society faces. This scholarship will go towards supporting me as I pursue these academic endeavors and continue my research.

IB Honors (IBH) Sophomore & Junior Achievement Scholarships

Recognizes outstanding achievement for a sophomore and junior currently enrolled in the IB Honors Program. Applications are judged on evidence of outstanding achievements in academics and leadership activities.

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IBH Sophomore & Junior Achievement Scholarship



Alaina Langston
IBH Sophomore

I am a sophomore in IB Honors with interests in pursuing a graduate degree that lies within the realm of genomics. Next fall semester, along with my studies, I will begin working in the Spinella Lab which focuses on the molecular mechanisms of cancer therapeutics and mechanisms of chemoresistance in certain types of cancer. I am deeply grateful for this scholarship, as it allows me to focus on my passion for the biological sciences and as a measure of my dedication to my studies.



Ella Narag
IBH Junior

I am studying IB Honors and Global Studies with a strong focus in Public Health and Health Policy! I am currently studying for the LSAT, as I hope to pursue a MPH/JD dual degree after graduation. This scholarship will help me in reaching my goals of applying to graduate schools to further my interest in identifying and improving healthcare disparities in the United States.

Dr. Stewart D. Fordham Award

The award, made possible by a generous donation by Dr. Fordham, supports an undergraduate scholarship for students who are completing their undergraduate degree program and are planning on attending medical school immediately after graduation.



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Dr. Stewart D. Fordham Award



Jesus Cardenas

Jesus is pre-medical student who majored in Integrative Biology. This fall, he will begin medical school at Rosalind Franklin University. Jesus aspires to pursue a career in orthopedic surgery. Jesus is passionate about helping marginalized communities and provide compassionate care.

Delcomyn International Study in Biology Award

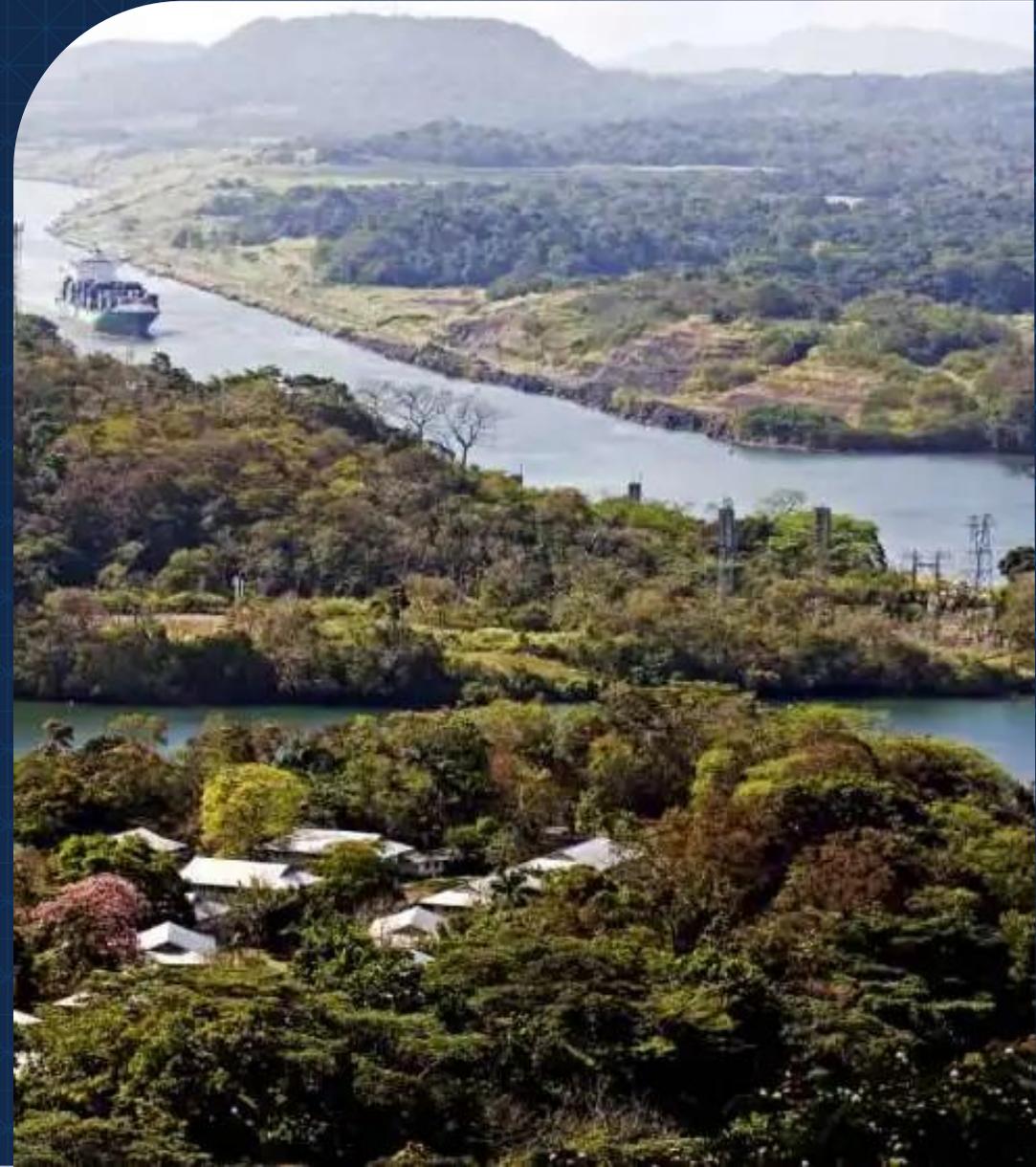
In 2008, Dr. Fred Delcomyn and Nancy A. Delcomyn established the “Delcomyn International Study in Biology Award” to benefit undergraduate students majoring in Integrative Biology who wish to take advantage of educational opportunities in biology outside the United States and Canada. Such activities may include but are not limited to research projects, intersession courses, or courses offered by the Organization of Tropical Studies, that are held outside of the United States of America



SIB Endowed Enhancement Scholarship

Made possible by funds given by an
anonymous donor.

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Fred and Nancy Delcomyn and the donors of the Endowed and SIB Enhancement funds supported:

Delcomyn Award

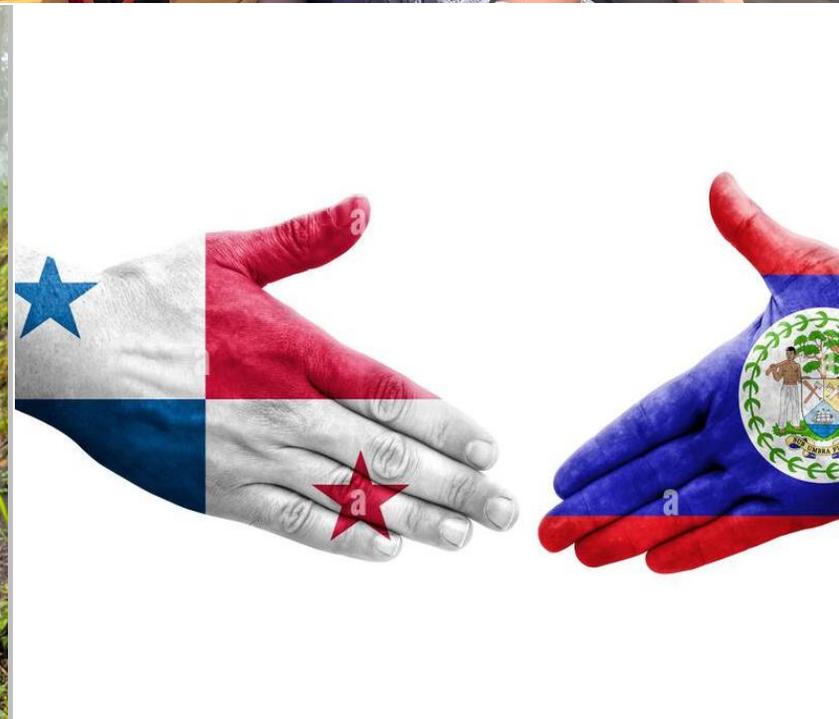
Emerson Echols
Jenaya Wilder

Endowed Enhancement fund

Benjamin Navar Arango
Julia Bondi
Veda Murphy
Katia Touchette

SIB Enhancement fund

Francisco Cornejo
Stefanie De La Cruz Aldana
Eliana Eng
Lily Porter



SIB

Joann Kavouras Memorial Scholarship

Dr. Jerry Kavouras established this award in memory of his mother. Dr. Kavouras received his BS in Biology at UIUC in 1995 and his PhD in 2002 from Marquette University. He is currently Professor and Chair of the Biology Department at Lewis University. The award provides a scholarship to a current IB sophomore or junior.



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Joann Kavouras Memorial Scholarship in Integrative Biology



Isabelle Saucedo

Isabelle Saucedo is a student here at UIUC majoring in Integrative Biology with a minor in Chemistry. She was recently accepted into the Integrative Biology Honors Program and is excited to start her journey in the fall. Isabelle's current career goal is working towards studying animal behavior and research, and she wishes to join a lab this upcoming semester. Being a first generation Mexican-American student, this scholarship will allow her to spend more time in the lab as well as time to focus on her studies without worry of financial burdens. Isabelle is excited to see where her journey here at UIUC takes her and is grateful to the donors and the Integrative Biology department for their continued support for students like herself!

Richard Ware Endowed Scholarship Fund

Established by Vickie S. Brooks,
James R. Ware and John R. Ware,
in honor of Richard Ware.

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Richard Ware Endowed Scholarship Fund



Natalie Budzyna

I am a freshman studying Integrative Biology on the pre-physician assistant track! I am involved in a few RSOs on campus thus far, such as the pre-physician assistant club and the Letters of Love organization. Recently certified as a nursing assistant, I am eager to use this opportunity as a steppingstone to gain valuable experience within the medical field. This scholarship will allow me to continue to pursue different opportunities and focus on my studies with lessened financial burden.



Natalie Flemenbaum

Natalie Flemenbaum is an ambitious undergraduate student pursuing an Integrative Biology Honors degree with a minor in Chemistry. With a deep passion for medicine, she is driven by her aspiration to become a pediatrician, aiming to provide compassionate and accessible healthcare to marginalized communities. Her academic journey reflects her dedication to both scientific research and community engagement. Currently, she is involved in a research lab investigating the impact of microplastics on the survival and longevity of *Daphnia*, a critical study in the realm of environmental and biological sciences.



Matthew Henry

Matthew Henry is expected to graduate in December 2026 with a B.S. in Integrative Biology. The award/scholarship will help fund his college education because after graduation, he plans on going to medical school and needs a way to pay off his debt before any further schooling. The internship will be used to support his research. His research will be focused on "Identifying the Presence and Concentrations of Heavy Metals in Urban Soils and its Impact on Plant and Public Health."

Dr. Kirk and Mrs. Shannon Moberg Scholarship in Integrative Biology

Provides a scholarship to a student
in IB who graduated from an Illinois
High School.

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Dr. Kirk and Mrs. Shannon Moberg Scholarship in Integrative Biology



Sonya Luebbers

After taking IB150: Organismal and Evolutionary Biology during Fall 2024 and declaring as an Integrative Biology major, Sonya became interested in gaining meaningful research experiences during her time at Illinois. After contacting Dr. Marianne Alleyne she was encouraged to participate in undergraduate research on bio-inspired design under the guidance of entomology graduate student Siti Fauziyah. Sonya would like to be able to develop and execute a research project in the Alleyne Bioinspiration Co-laborative during the summer of 2025 with the support of SIB.



Rachel Miller

I am studying Integrative Biology Honors with minors in Chemistry and Anthropology to understand evolution on both organismal and molecular levels. After graduation, I plan to study evolution and disease ecology in graduate school to go on to develop molecular-level disease treatments and vaccines. This scholarship helps lessen the financial burden of pursuing multiple higher education degrees, making it easier for me to pursue this future in increasing global health knowledge.



Mia Possin

I am currently a junior studying Integrative Biology with the goal of becoming a genetic counselor. I'm especially interested in how genetic information can guide individuals and families through important health decisions. I'm part of a research lab where I focus on genome annotation and data analysis in fish species, which has helped me build a strong foundation in genetics and research methods. This scholarship will support my academic journey and help me gain more experience in the field.

Chester W. & Nadine C. Houston Scholarship

Dr. Chet and Mrs. Nadine Houston provided the funds for this scholarship to recognize outstanding achievement in academics. Dr. Chet was a Professor at the University of Rhode Island and Nadine had a long career as a librarian. Their generous gift provides financial support to deserving SIB students.



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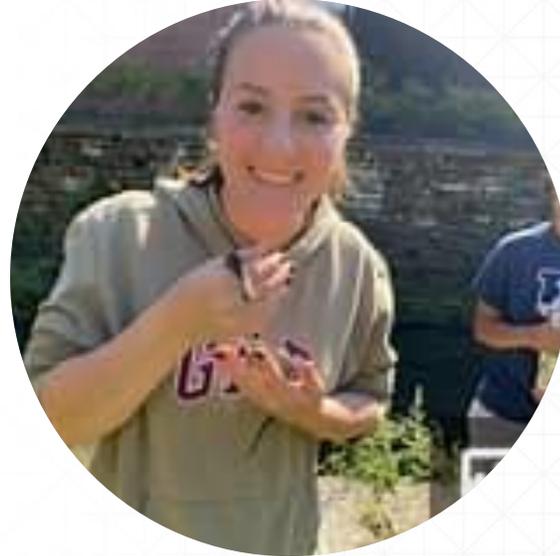


Chester W. & Nadine C. Houston Scholarship



Salman Rizvi

For my BS in Integrative Biology, I am helping with research on sustainable agricultural practices. Our group in Wendy Yang's lab is specifically investigating the benefits of growing crops alongside trees in diverse polycultures. We hope to find how this system can improve the yield of the crops, the quality of the soil, and the reduction of carbon emissions. I am grateful for this scholarship as it helps me continue to contribute to this cause which will certainly grow increasingly important as time goes on.



Sarah Rodriguez

Sarah Rodriguez has been working for the Harmon-Threatt lab and would benefit greatly from the opportunity to work full time as an intern in that lab or a similar lab to go more in depth with the research process. She is interested in conservation, restoration, ecology, and physiology.



Mariam Vaid

My name is Mariam Vaid and I am currently a Sophomore at UIUC in the Integrative Biology Honors Program, on the pre-med track. I am an undergraduate research at the Musculoskeletal Morphology and Biomechanics Laboratory within the College of Applied Health Sciences. I am currently researching the correlation between tissue degeneration (specifically in the glenoid labrum and joint capsule) and self-reported shoulder pain in pre and post menopausal individuals. I intend to utilize the funds from this scholarship to attend research conferences to not only present my own research but learn from others' research as well. I also hope to supplement my pre-medical journey using this funding, to assist in application fees and MCAT study materials. This scholarship will help me to gain new experiences in the research sphere and allow me to pursue my passion in healthcare.



Chester W. and Nadine C. Houston Scholarship



Mahil Venkatesh

Hi, my name is Mahil Venkatesh and I am a sophomore in IBH with minors in Chemistry and Spanish. Outside of academics, I love watching Tamil movies, playing the guitar, and playing basketball. With this award, I am motivated to pursue further research opportunities and gain invaluable skills on my journey as a pre-medical student.



Sophia Vodnik

I am a second-year Integrative Biology Honors student with a minor in Chemistry, following the pre-veterinary track. I have started my research in the Wildlife Epidemiology Lab under Dr. Matthew Allender, focusing on understanding disease transmission between wild and domestic species. Through independent research, I plan to further investigate these dynamics and how they can inform veterinary practices and improve animal health. This scholarship will provide financial support for my research over the summer semester and assist in covering veterinary school application expenses.

School of Integrative Biology Endowed Scholarship

Is made possible thanks to a
generous anonymous donation.

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School of Integrative Biology Endowed Scholarship



Megan O'Sullivan

Hello! I am a sophomore in IB Honors and minoring in Chemistry and Statistics. Next semester, I will be starting in Dr. Gaulke's lab to study the impact of microbiome-host interactions on organismal health. I am grateful for this scholarship, which will help me to one day pursue graduate school and will allow me to spend more time pursuing research.



Jenna Rosas

I'm a junior majoring in Integrative Biology with a minor in Ecology and Conservation Biology. I'm currently doing research in the Bell Lab, where I study the behavioral ecology of the three-spined stickleback. I'm especially interested in parental care, specifically how this species invests in and interacts with its offspring, and what that can tell us about the evolution of social behavior. This endowed scholarship is helping me continue hands-on research and build a strong foundation as I prepare for a future in biological research.

SIB Alumni and Friends Awards

These awards have been made possible thanks to several donations from our alumni and friends. Their support has allowed SIB to offer unparalleled educational and research opportunities for our students. These scholarships have given our students access to additional resources, trainings, meetings, and more as they build their research skills and grow their careers.



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Anderson-Robertson SIB Alumni & Friends Scholarship



Julia Aniecko

I am pursuing a B.S. in Integrative Biology and am set to graduate in May 2027. Currently, I am an Undergraduate Research Assistant in Dr. Wendy Yang's lab. This award will support my continued academic development and allow me to explore the intersection between Integrative Biology and medicine, my planned career path. My research experience so far has included studying electrophysiological responses in cockroaches and the effects of fertilization on experimental soil plots.



Samantha Sanford

I am a sophomore majoring in Integrative Biology. This summer, I will be working in the Allan Lab, studying how certain factors affect the prevalence of vector-borne diseases. I am incredibly grateful for this scholarship because it will support my academic and professional journey and allow me to dedicate my focus to my education.

David SIB Alumni & Friends Scholarship



Valeria Ocampo

I am a sophomore from Glendale Heights, IL, majoring in Integrative Biology and pursuing an Anthropology minor. I am working towards becoming a biologist to understand the variety of life systems in order to protect and preserve our environment. This scholarship will graciously support my academic journey, helping to hone my skills in many areas of biology.

James & Susan Hatfield SIB Alumni & Friends Scholarship



Samuel Cho

Hi! My name is Sam. I am an undergraduate student in Integrative Biology. I hope to enter the field of wildlife biology and study animals in the future. This scholarship will help me achieve those goals by funding my bachelor's degree, so that I can learn and experience wildlife biology skills. I hope to use the knowledge I gain here to bring them with me when I enter the field of biological research!

Mendus SIB Alumni & Friends Scholarship



Francisco Cornejo

I am a senior in Integrative Biology and a proud Chicago native. I plan to return to Chicago to help build a culture that values nature, sees itself as part of a living system, and feels empowered to make choices that preserve and restore it. The award helped me to study abroad, something I never imagined possible, giving me direct experience of the beauty and fragility of life across the world. Though I do not yet know if I'll pursue law, medicine, or research, I know that this award affirms my commitment to bringing people closer to the natural world.



Trinity Dockery

Trinity is a dedicated college student pursuing a degree in integrative Biology with the goal of becoming a secondary school teacher. Passionate about both science and education, Trinity aspires to inspire the next generation of students to develop a love for learning and a deeper understanding of the natural world.



Abraham Morales

My name is Abraham Morales, and I'm a Junior majoring in Integrative Biology on the Pre-dental track. I'm passionate about both dentistry and research, currently working in two labs. In the Roach Brain Lab, I study the origins of biodiversity by researching cockroaches and other arthropods, focusing on evolutionary patterns and biological phenomena. In the Realizing Increased Photosynthetic Efficiency (RIPE) Lab, I help explore ways to improve photosynthetic efficiency in crops to address global food security. This scholarship will support my research and help me further develop my skills in both biological research and sustainable solutions.

Mendus SIB Alumni & Friends Scholarship



Milly Manno

I am studying for my B.S. in Integrative Biology with a minor in Anthropology, and I am currently working as an undergraduate research assistant at the Dolezal Bee Lab! I plan to use the funding to further support my research project studying pathogen load and transmission in/between honeybees and native Illinois bees in the lab over the summer.



Katie McGovern

Katie McGovern is an Integrative Biology major on the pre-med track at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She developed an interest in extracellular vesicles (EVs) during her research at the Wake Forest Institute of Regenerative Medicine, which led her to the Boppart Laboratory. Her research goal is to determine if EVs from aged mice induce cellular aging and whether exercise can modify these vesicles to reduce aging effects. Katie has also gained clinical experience by shadowing trauma surgeons at UChicago and volunteering at Carle Hospital. This scholarship will motivate her even more to pursue her future career in medicine and support her continued exploration of biology as she works toward becoming a physician.

Rubinkowski SIB Alumni & Friends Scholarship



Julia Ciura

I am a second-year student on the pre-Physician Assistant pathway studying Integrative Biology and obtaining certificates in Integrative Health and Health Technology. I am involved in several different activities across campus including an executive position in Her Campus at Illinois, intern for two different marketing/social media companies, volunteering and making philanthropic contributions through the prePA club, along with undergraduate research in Alison Bell's lab, cultivating a brain atlas of the three-spined stickleback to further the research occurring in the lab. This funding will allow me to prioritize my studies, as I currently work as a patient care technician at a hospital and will allow me to continue to pursue different opportunities to nurture my knowledge.

Unverferth SIB Alumni & Friends Scholarship



Julia Persak

I am studying integrative biology with the goal of working in conservation education. As an undergraduate researcher in the wildlife epidemiology lab on campus, I am gaining hands-on experience with data analysis and general lab protocols. This scholarship will help alleviate my financial burden and allow me to continue focusing more on educational experiences and career development.

SIB Alumni & Friends Scholarship



Akilah Samad

My name is Akilah Samad, and I am an undergraduate student majoring in Integrative Biology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. I currently work in Dr. Justin Aronoff's Binaural Hearing Lab, where we study auditory processing and neural integration, particularly in individuals with cochlear implants. My research focuses on how the brain interprets binaural cues, which is essential for understanding speech perception and sound localization. This work has strengthened my passion for neuroscience and inspired me to explore the intersection of sensory systems and patient health. I plan to pursue a career in medicine, with a focus on serving underserved communities through research, clinical care, and advocacy. This scholarship will help me continue building a strong foundation in science and giving back. It will also help support my journey towards becoming a physician who uplifts and empowers those in need.



Neha Siram

Hi! My name is Neha Siram, and I am an Integrative Biology honors student researching the PF20243 protein family with Dr. Anastasia Manesis. Our work explores a highly conserved protein motif that undergoes critical post-translational modifications, focusing on the FcoP protein and its potential enzymatic transformations. We aim to uncover novel insights into protein modification mechanisms and metal binding site formation, with potential implications for biotechnology and medical research.

SIB Alumni & Friends Scholarship



Claire Skowron



Junhe Zhang

My name is Junhe Zhang, and I am currently in my third year of the Integrative Biology BS+MS program, set to begin my Master's studies this coming summer. I am actively involved in research projects examining the dilution effect on the human microbiome and top-down modulation in the auditory system. This scholarship is not only a meaningful recognition of my academic journey so far but also a source of encouragement as I work toward deeper engagement with these projects. I aspire to pursue independent research in the near future and contribute original insights to the scientific community.

**Congratulations to our
Undergraduate award winners**



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SIB Graduate Awards

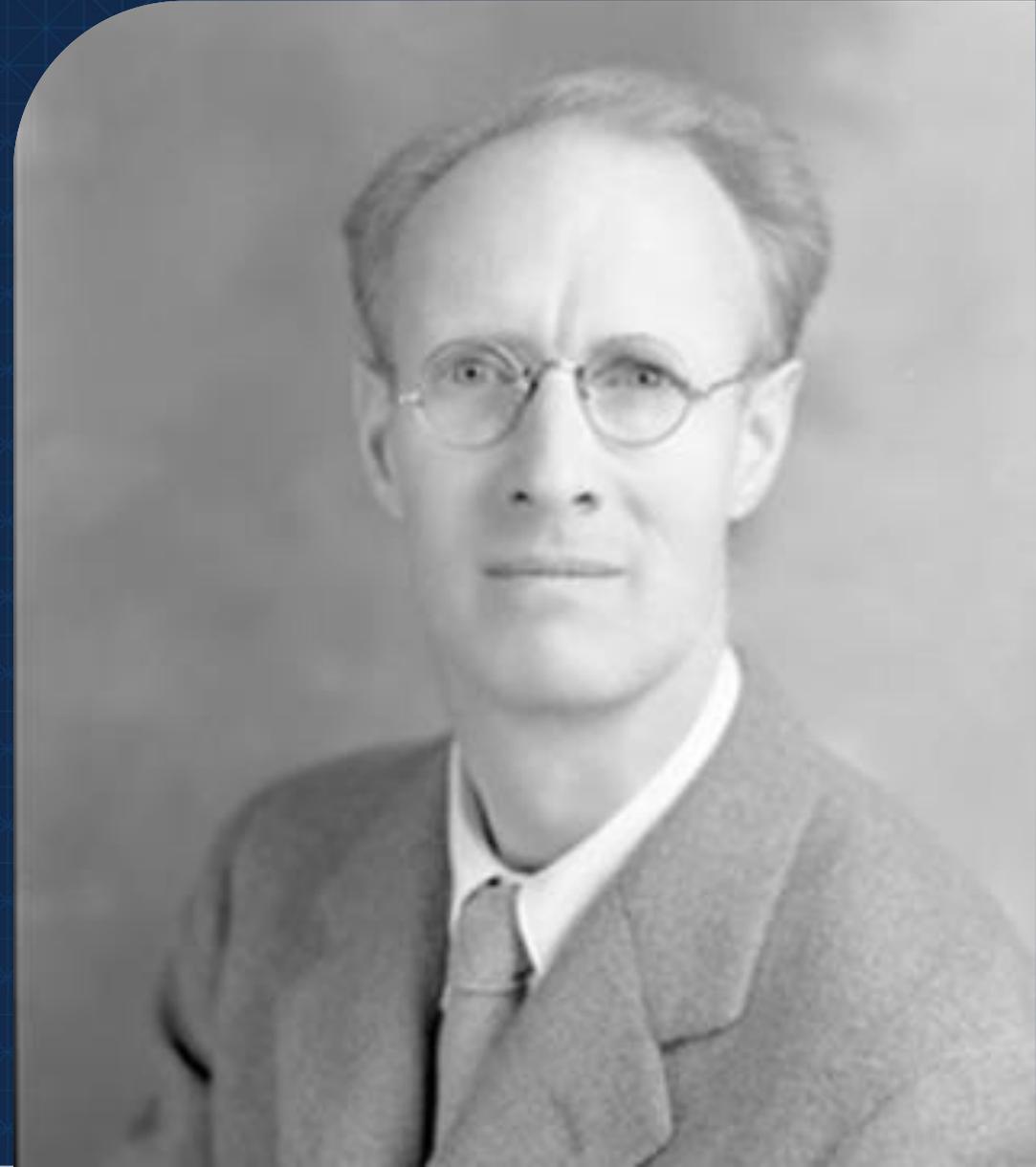


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Robert Emerson Memorial Award

The Emerson Award honors a former professor in the Department of Botany. Dr. Emerson was a distinguished and dedicated scientist of international stature in the field of photosynthesis. His research explored the action of pigments, including the carotenoids and phycobilins, in photosynthesis. Dr. Emerson received many honors in recognition of his scientific achievements and was a member of the National Academy of Sciences. This award was established by Dr. Emerson's family and friends in the early 1960's.



Robert Emerson Memorial Award



Ratna Karatgi

My research explores the factors that drive and maintain variation in fin coloration in bluefin killifish, which exhibit both color polymorphism (discrete color morphs) and phenotypic plasticity in response to environmental conditions. I investigate how micro- vs. macrohabitat variation in the developmental environment influences plasticity in fin coloration. To uncover the genetic mechanisms behind this polymorphism, I analyze gene expression differences associated with fin color variation. Lastly, I examine how fin coloration and lighting environments shape aggression and boldness behaviors.

Isabel Norton Award

To provide research funding for advanced master's and PhD students for the completion of their thesis or dissertation research.

I ILLINOIS



Isabel Norton Award



Anne Aka



Luke Settles

I seek to address methodological uncertainties within the field of pollinator eDNA, such as the poor understanding of DNA deposition rates by target species as well as detection efficiency of widely used yet novel protocols. I propose running several iterations of calibration experiments which would indicate how much DNA was recoverable under controlled lab settings before scaling up, granting us a better understanding of field-collected data and contributing significantly to a knowledge gap in the field. Additionally, I would continue an existing project in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Energy comparing the efficacy of eDNA to traditional pollinator survey methods in solar facilities.



Michelle Villalobos

My name is Michelle Villalobos, and I am a MS student in EEB. Currently, I am doing research in Dr. Carla Caceres's lab, studying *Daphnia dentifera*, a keystone species in freshwater lake and pond ecosystems. My research focuses on studying the effects of the gut microbiome on host-parasite interactions in *Daphnia dentifera* and the fungus *Metschnikowia bicuspidata*. Currently, I am also investigating whether sex-specific differences in *Daphnia* also contribute to the tolerance of disease.

Lebus Graduate Scholar Awards

This award was established by James Hagan to honor the memory of his aunt, Bertha Lebus. The award is to be used to support summer research for meritorious MS and PhD UIUC LAS students in the life sciences and other fields. This award is intended to recognize students with outstanding potential to succeed in their chosen academic field.



Lebus Graduate Scholar Awards



Jeannette Cullum

I am a Ph.D. candidate and NSF Graduate Research Fellow advised by Dr. Carla Cáceres in the Program in Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Biology. I study the impact of anthropogenic stressors on disease dynamics in freshwater ecosystems. I currently focus on the effects of pesticide runoff on a freshwater zooplankton, *Daphnia*, and its fungal pathogen. I plan to use this funding to investigate how exposure to pesticide pollution changes the microbiome of juvenile and adult *Daphnia*. This work will allow me to expand the scope of my research and explore links between host fitness and the microbiome.

Harley J. Van Cleave Research Award

The fund provides research support for graduate students investigating new frontiers and demonstrating promise and high aptitude in the fields of Cell and Structural Biology, Physiology, Ecology, Microbiology, Genetics, and related fields.



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Harley J. Van Cleave Research Award



Yutao Chen

I'm from the ABC lab. I work on micro-, nano- topographies on insect cuticles and study their multifunctionality. My main project focuses on studying antibacterial property of the nanostructures on cicada wings and mimicking these structures on engineering material surfaces. I'm also exploring the structures and chemistry of other insect cuticles.



Naomi Cobb

My research aims to develop a computational model of the tarsal microstructures in Madagascar hissing cockroaches, providing insight into the mechanisms by which the cockroach maximizes surface area contact across different surfaces. The study will focus on the microstructures of the attachment pads and the structural integrity of the unguis. By employing Finite Element Analysis (FEA), this work will contribute to the development of bioinspired adhesive materials and establish methodology for comparative studies on attachment structures in other insect species.



Samantha Dubbs

I am a current second year graduate student in the Entomology Department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and co-advised by Dr. May Berenbaum and Dr. Adam Dolezal. My current research focuses on various aspects of honey bee-derived propolis – including chemical composition, its effects on honey bee physiology, and honey bee resin foraging behavior.

Harley J. Van Cleave Research Award



Anugerah Fajar

I am first year PhD student In Dr. Xuguo Zhou Lab. I come from Indonesia. Currently planning to study termite behavior and the genes that may affect the behavior. For starters, I am looking for the connection between foraging decision-making process and foraging-related gene expression level which I will start investigating this summer. This stipend means a lot for me to ensure a sustainable working condition during summer period. For the future, I hope I can expand my study to not only behavior but also into termite physiology too.



Anna Grimes

I study *Daphnia*, a genus of aquatic crustaceans that float through the water column and play a vital role in freshwater ecosystem function. My research focuses on how these keystone species detect and respond to predator cues, and how human impacts, like pesticide runoff, might disrupt these defenses. This award will support both fieldwork in local aquatic systems and controlled lab studies to better understand environmental stressors and predator-prey dynamics.



Timothy Legare

I am a first-year PhD student in the Fuller lab, studying drivers of speciation. I am particularly interested in hybridization and behavioral isolation's role in maintaining and degrading species complexes. I am currently investigating the *Lucania* killifish, after their recent introduction into the San Francisco Bay. This award will allow me to begin sequencing killifish from the bay, so we can begin investigating and comparing their population dynamics to what we already know from Florida, their native range.

Harley J. Van Cleave Research Award



Chan Liu

I am pursuing a doctorate degree in entomology under the supervision of Dr. Xuguo "Joe" Zhou in the Department of Entomology. My research focuses on understanding the evolution of social organization in termites and cockroaches. Specifically, I aim to identify both genomic and behavioral factors that might have fostered the emergence and elaboration of social traits in these insects. This scholarship will support me in developing bioassays to explore the relationship between learning behavior and social organization in termites.



Lauren Otolski

I am a PhD student in Jim Dalling's lab, researching factors influencing tropical wood decomposition. Last January, I collected samples from my wood decay experiment in Panama, and will be working this summer to link fungal decomposer communities with initial wood traits.



Sumashini Pagaldveatti

I'm studying seed-fungal interactions in a wet tropical forest using fig species as a model system. I intend to understand host preferences of fungi among congeneric species and their host specific effects. I'm also exploring the impact of land use change such as edge effects on seed-fungal interactions.

Harley J. Van Cleave Research Award



Vincent Prayugo

I'm a 2nd year PhD student at the Dolezal Lab studying the effects of stressors in honey bees, specifically pesticides and viruses. I plan to use the funding to research the potential of Israeli acute paralysis virus (IAPV) to manipulate immature honey bee cuticular hydrocarbons profile to increase its fitness within the colony.



Ignacio Sparrow Munoz

I study and develop synthetic biology techniques and apply them to plants in order to help create the new generation of supercrops. This award will directly fund my travel to the 2025 Synthetic Biology Engineering, Evolution and Design conference in Houston, TX, where I will be able to share the incredibly exciting work we have been performing here at UIUC and establish new connections for future collaboration.



Malavika Venu

I am studying the evolutionary origins of eusocial behavior using *Drosophila melanogaster* social networks.



Allanis Vera Barron

Hello! I am Allanis Vera Barron. Currently, I am a second-year PhD student in the department of Plant Biology. My research pursues studying and understanding the interactions between plants and microorganisms, specifically the induced immune response of seeds against the attack of fungal pathogens in tropical forest ecosystems. This study will provide us with a better understanding in how the coffee microbiome is shaped at different stages of coffee fermentation and how different microorganisms could influence coffee flavor in one of the most priced coffee variety “Geisha” in Panama. This award will help me to process my samples from Panama through DNA extraction and sequencing. I really appreciate the support that you all give, specifically, in this research field.⁶⁶



Francis M. & Harlie M. Clark Summer Fellowship & Research Support Grant

These grants were established to honor Dr. Francis M. Clark and his wife, Harlie M. Clark. Dr. Clark joined the then Department of Bacteriology, later the Department of Microbiology, as an instructor in 1933, after having completed his undergraduate and graduate work here previously. He had a distinguished career, teaching microbiology and conducting research in the microbiology of foods. He was past president of the Illinois Society for Microbiology.



Francis M. & Harlie M. Clark Summer Fellowship



Tristan Barley

I am a Ph.D. student in Dr. Adam Dolezal's lab studying the potential effects of apiary presence on native bee communities. Specifically, I plan to use this funding to better understand if honey bee pathogens are more prevalent in native bees when apiaries are present. This research will help inform native bee conservation efforts, while also providing opportunities for undergraduates in Dr. Dolezal's lab to get experience conducting ecological field work.



Abby Webber

I am a PhD candidate in Phil Anderson's lab studying the evolution of parasitoid wasp ovipositors!

Francis M. & Harlie M. Clark Research Support Grant



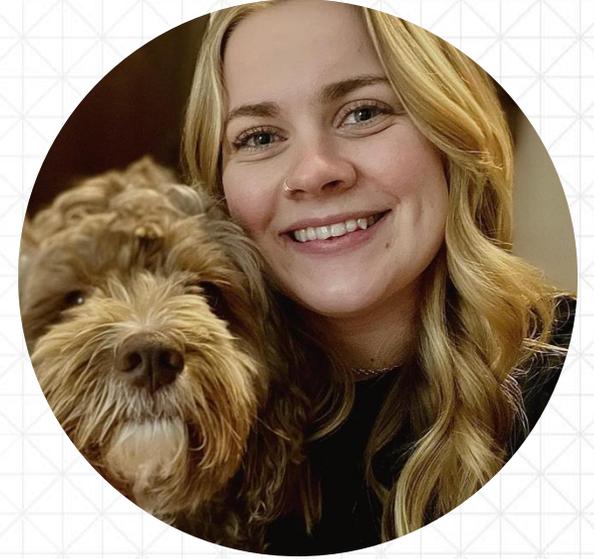
Becky Cloud

I am a PhD candidate in the Cáceres lab researching *Culex* mosquito microbiomes. I plan to use this award to fund experiments evaluating the interaction of *Wolbachia* infection and stress on mosquito life history traits and vector competence.



Siqi Han

I am studying the organization of the primary somatosensory area of rodent brains and its connection to the development of complex social behaviors. I plan to use the funding for my experiments, such as histology and/or MRI data acquisition. This funding allows me to explore the relationship between in-vivo brain anatomical features and its counterpart in histologically prepared brains.



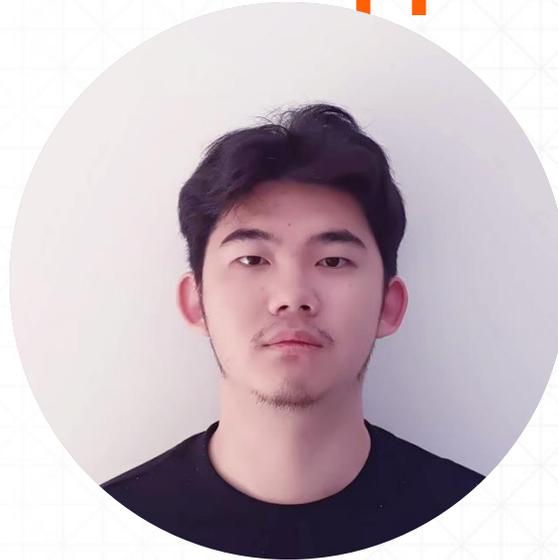
Julia Jehn

Francis M. & Harlie M. Clark Research Support Grant



Satinderpal Kaur

I am doing my Ph.D. in Entomology. My research is majorly focused on understanding the effect of flooding stress of maize on plant-insect interactions. I will be working in a field project in which we artificially flooded the maize crop and I will be analyzing the metabolomic profile changes in the maize plants in response of flooding stress, and the implications of these metabolite changes for insect feeding. I plan to use the funding to my summer research, this summer I will be conducting the second season of this field study. This scholarship will be very helpful for me in conducting my field research as well as it will motivate me to work more effectively.



Yuqiao Li

I'm a graduate student from Program in Ecology, Evolution & Conservation biology (PEEC) at the University of Illinois. My current research is related to population genetics. I'm assessing the susceptibility to chronic wasting disease of the Columbian white-tailed deer using sequencing techniques. This award would provide essential support for our experiments and contribute to the protection of the deer population.



Gio Madrigal

I am using population-level genomic data to characterize the fin color polymorphism in male bluefin killifish. I will use long-read sequencing to supplement the limited information inherit to short-read sequencing.

Francis M. & Harlie M. Clark Research Support Grant



Simmi Rana

I am a PhD student in the plant biology department researching the mechanisms contributing to nitrous oxide production in agricultural fields. This funding will assist in my travel to a conference this year to present my research relating to greenhouse gas emissions from a droughted field under a rainout shelter facility.



Adrien Seabloom

I am working towards my PhD and pursuing research about native bees, specifically the effects of agricultural fungicides on ground nesting bees. I plan to use the funding to research the effects of Pyraclostrobin on ground nesting bee larval development and nesting behaviors. This fellowship will help me complete essential pilot studies over the summer that will pave the way for the rest of my research on pollinators throughout my time here at UIUC.



Nina Shearill

Hello! My name is Nina Shearill, and I am a MS student in Dr. Carla Caceres' lab. I am currently studying the effects of temperature on the density of *Wolbachia pipientis* in *Culex pipiens* mosquitoes. These funds are greatly appreciated.

Graduate Research Fund

Mary Willson was one of the early architects of the field of evolutionary ecology, a discipline which examines the origin and function of traits that contribute to organismal adaptations in nature. A hallmark of Mary's contribution to the field is the union of a strong conceptual foundation with an appreciation for the natural history of organisms.

During her long and distinguished career on the faculty at the University of Illinois (1966-1990), she moved the field forward by not being limited to the standard approach of asking "how" organisms behave a certain way, and instead asked "why" they do so. It is this perspective that inspired her students and colleagues to pursue studies of major unresolved questions in avian ecology, plant ecology, and plant-animal interactions, while embracing the rich diversity of nature.

The Mary F. Willson Graduate Research Fund will help cover the cost of supplies and travel associated with graduate student field research.



Mary F. Willson Graduate Research Fund



Julia Jehn

I'm pursuing my PhD in plant ecology and physiology, exploring how herbivory influences plant phenotypes. The funds will expand my research from greenhouses to natural habitats, crucial for understanding ecological processes. Your support fuels our lab's efforts to unravel plant responses to ecological challenges, shaping the future of plant science and conservation.

**Congrats SIB Grad
Award winners!**



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**Program in Ecology,
Evolution & Conservation
(PEEC)**

Summer Research Grant

PEEC Block Grant

Research Assistant Stipend

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PEEC Summer Research Grant



Becky Cloud



Jeanette Cullum



Anna Grimes



Lauren Otolski

PEEC Summer Research Award



Zander Perelman



Adrien Seabloom



Malavika Venu

During July and August 2025, I will be conducting behavioral trials with Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes at the Toronto Zoo to better understand the agonistic and reproductive behaviors of this imperiled species. Specifically, I will be investigating how overwintering experience impacts the occurrence of agonistic behaviors and which behaviors are important for determining male-male fighting outcomes. Results from my study will improve our understanding of Eastern Massasauga biology and can be used to improve captive breeding efforts, a crucial part of future conservation efforts and repatriation strategies for this federally listed rattlesnake.

PEEC Block Grant



Naomi Cobb

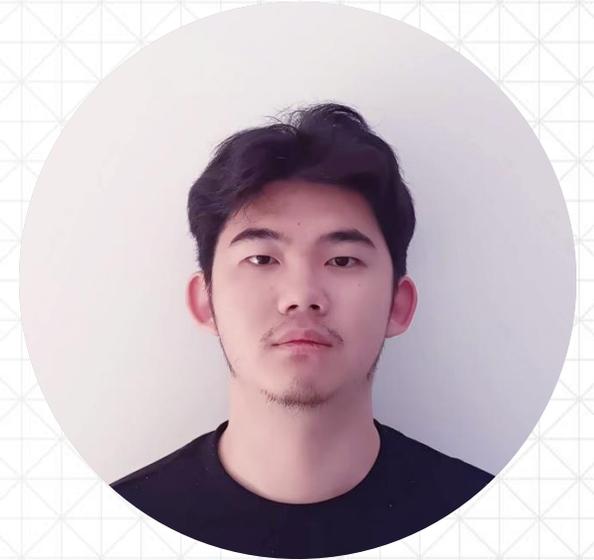


Maris Daleo

I am a DVM/PhD Candidate, currently working on my PhD in the Wildlife Epidemiology Lab. My research focuses on reptiles that are confiscated from the illegal wildlife trade, and my goal is to determine a method that allows us to safely release confiscated individuals to free-ranging populations on an equal health-plane. I plan to use this funding to improve pathogen molecular diagnostic techniques to improve pathogen surveillance and our understanding of disease ecology in confiscated and free-ranging eastern box turtles. This scholarship will help illegally traded reptiles all around the world and improve reptile health information in captive, confiscated, and free-ranging animals.



Ratna Karatgi



Yuqiao Li

I plan to extract rare insertionally polymorphic endogenous retroviruses from published human genomic datasets. And try to analyze the inserted loci to reveal their role in genetic evolution of host lineages.

PEEC Summer Block Grant



Sean Ooi



Adrien Seabloom



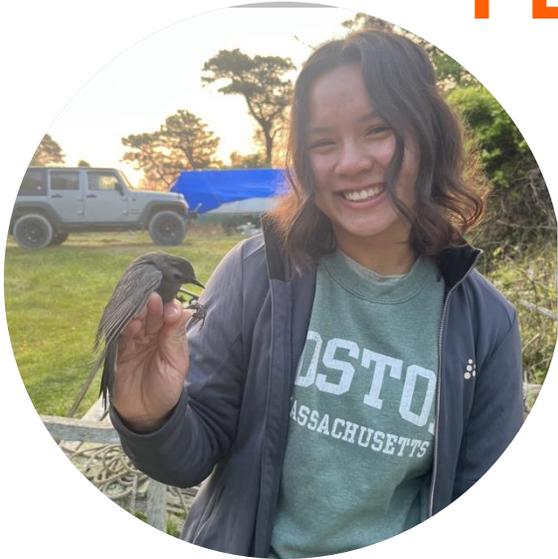
Malavika Venu



Fahren Zachery

I am a PhD student in the program in ecology, evolution, and conservation biology, studying the human microbiome ecosystem and its relationship with diversity and disease from an ecological point of view. My research will investigate the dynamics between human health outcomes and microbial diversity within the human microbiome using meta-analysis and ecological diversity metrics common in medical literature. I will be examining the factors such as the microbiome region, specificity of the disease, and diversity index that deepen our understanding about the influence of microbial diversity on disease prevalence. This current project will expand knowledge on the functional role of the human microbiome and provide insight that could be helpful in guiding future healthcare and disease management.

PEEC Summer Research Assistant



Caylee Chan

My overarching research interest is investigating how climate change and land use change affect the spatial distribution of disease vectors, specifically mosquitoes and ticks, and using this knowledge to inform public health policy. Currently, I am researching the effects of green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) on mosquito habitats and predicting where GSI is likely to be adopted in the United States to evaluate potential impacts on mosquito-borne disease prevalence.



Vivian Cheng

I am doing population genomics and evolution research on *Monodon monoceros* (narwhal). I am combining genomics methods with archival data from the historical expeditions in which these narwhal were collected and Inuit perspectives to create a more holistic approach to performing genomics research on species under conservation focus.



Anna Grimes



Lauren Otolski

PEEC Summer Research Assistant



**Roberto Cucalon
Tamayo**



Derek McFarland



Zander Perelman



Malavika Venu

**Congrats PEEC Grad
Award winners!**



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Entomology & INHS Awards



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Entomology Undergraduate Research Award

It is a long-standing priority of the Department of Entomology to provide high-quality research experiences to undergraduates. This annual award recognizes outstanding achievement in undergraduate research.



Entomology Undergraduate Research Award



Katharine Vanker



Jenaya Wilder

Herbert Holdsworth Ross Memorial Award

Herbert H. Ross, BS University of British Columbia 1927, MS and PhD UIUC 1929 and 1933. He married Jean Alexander in 1932, and she assisted him throughout his life with his research. Ross was at the Natural History Survey from 1931 until he retired in 1969. He was a brilliant systematist who generously shared his passion and wisdom with generations of students. Funding for this award is possible due to the generous donation of Dr. Charles Alexander Ross and his wife Dr. June Ross, son and daughter-in-law of Herbert and Jean Ross.



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Herbert Holdsworth Ross Memorial Award



Ember Clodfelter



John Hodge



Sumashini Pagaldevatti

Herbert Holdsworth Ross Memorial Award



Johanna Schwartz



Wilfred Tang



Valeria Trivellone

Philip W. Smith Memorial Award

The Smith Memorial was established by Dorothy M. Smith and friends in honor of her husband. Dr. Smith was a renowned herpetologist and ichthyologist. He was intensely interested in the taxonomy, natural history, and distributions of animals. After completing his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois, he spent his entire career at the Illinois Natural History Survey, retiring in 1979. He served as curator of the fish, reptile, and amphibian collections, as a researcher, and administrator. For the last 14 years of his career, he also served as a Professor of Zoology at the University of Illinois. He produced over 100 scientific publications. He is probably best known for his two authoritative monographs, *The Amphibians and Reptiles of Illinois* (1961) and *The Fishes of Illinois* (1979).



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Philip W. Smith Memorial Award



Anne Aka



Tara Beveroth



Anastasia Rahlin

Fred H. Schmidt Summer Scholar

The Fred H. Schmidt summer award, endowed by his niece and nephew Margaret and Ed Larsen, commemorates alumnus Fred H. Schmidt, who received a BS degree in 1957 and a master's degree in entomology here in 1959 and spent many years at the USDA Forest Service Laboratory in Corvallis, OR. In accordance with his wishes, the Schmidt Summer Award is used to support recruitment and retention of students during the summer months.



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as a Student
1957



Fred at Retirement
2012

Fred H. Schmidt Summer Scholars



Elizabeth Bello

I am an entomology PhD candidate in the ABC Lab studying hydrophobic insect surfaces and bioinspiration. I'm currently researching leafhopper brochosomes, tiny superhydrophobic nanoparticles, to develop new particle-based waterproof materials. This scholarship, which I'm incredibly grateful for, will allow me to continue my research over the summer.



Satinderpal Kaur



Luke Settles



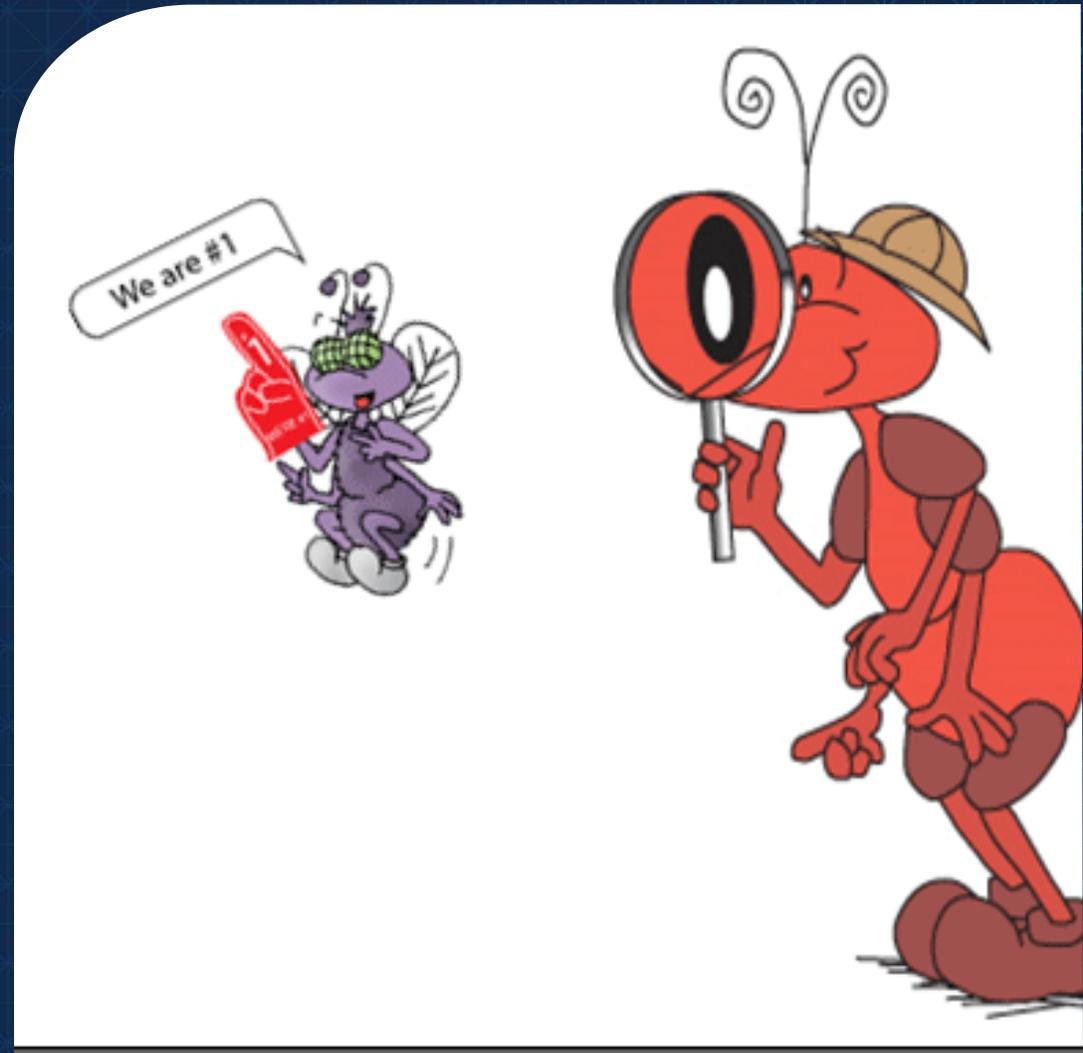
Timo Wayman

I am studying for my masters in Entomology, working on a project to improve conservation tools for native bees. I plan to use the funding for materials for my experiments that will hopefully help us better conserve bees in the future

Entomology Summer Block Grant

The Entomology Summer Block Grant provides summer support for graduate students in Entomology to enable them to continue to make progress in their thesis research.

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Entomology Summer Block Grant



Yutao Chen



Erinn Dady



Anugerah Fajar

Entomology Summer Block Grant



Siti Fauziyah

I propose a comprehensive study of non-migratory and migratory dragonflies in the Libellulidae family by combining evolutionary and computational approaches, to help understand how wing morphology contributes to aerodynamic efficiency. My first task was to identify Libellulidae species that would be available for study (museum and/or field collection). In this study, 1) I will collect the morphological data from the fore- and hindwing and run simulation to learn how these morphological feature affect the wing's rigidity, and 2) perform the bending test to calculate the flexural stiffness of the wing.



Satinderpal Kaur

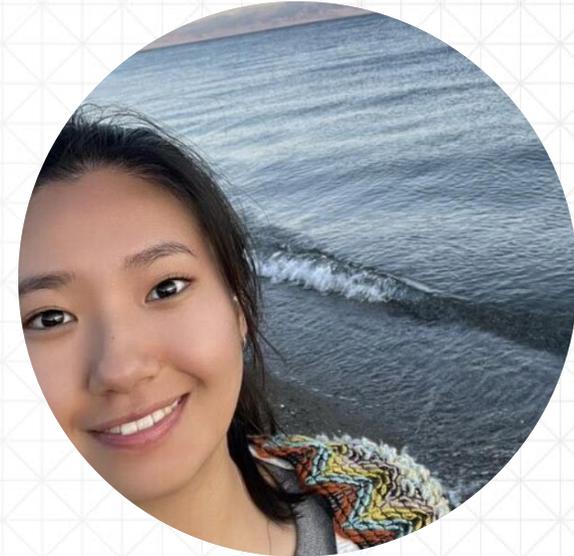


Chan Liu

Entomology Summer Block Grant



Vincent Prayugo



Minxing Zhu

My research investigates whether tomato plants recovering from flooding stress are more attractive to *Spodoptera exigua* (beet armyworm) for oviposition and whether these plants provide a better food source for larvae. I aim to understand the chemical ecology underlying these interactions, to better explain the insect behavior/performance observed.

Dr. Ting H. Hsiao and Catherine T. Hsiao Fellowship Fund

Made possible by a generous donation by
Dr. Ting H. Hsiao and Catherine T. Hsiao
for graduate students.



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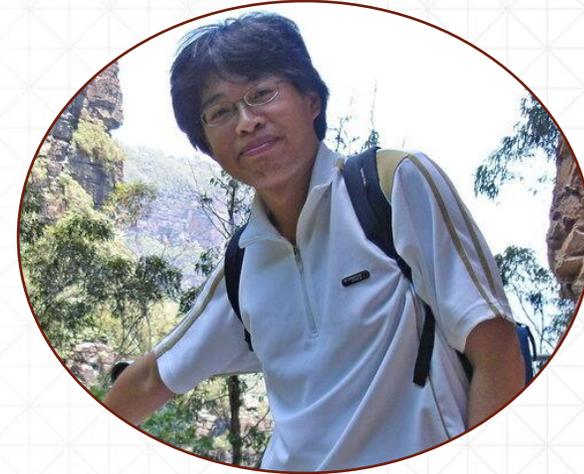


Dr. Ting H. Hsiao and Catherine T. Hsiao Fellowship Fund



Johanna Schwartz

My research is focused on wing morphology and evolution. Specifically, I am interested in hindwing folding and describing the wing-base structures of cockroaches



Wen-Yen Yu

Wen-Yen Wu is an entomology graduate student in Dr. May Berenbaum's lab. He is studying the impacts of pesticide residues on honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) colony health and its amelioration by dietary phytochemicals.

Stewart H. Berlocher

Graduate Student Research Support Award

Professor emeritus, who conducted research on speciation and evolution of insects including flies in the genus *Rhagoletis*. This award provides funding for field research in entomology.



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Stewart H. Berlocher Graduate Student Research Support Award



Theodore Cook



Anugerah Fajar



Siti Fauziyah

Ellis MacLeod/Metcalf

Award for Outstanding Teaching by a Graduate Student in the Department of Entomology

Ellis G. MacLeod joined the faculty in the Department of Entomology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in 1966, after completing his dissertation research and postdoctoral position at Harvard University. Although his own research interests were focused primarily on systematics and evolution of species in the order Neuroptera, his knowledge of Class Insecta was famously encyclopedic. His greatest contribution to the discipline of entomology was his exemplary teaching, particularly in the core course, required of all graduate students, in insect systematics. In recognition of his classroom teaching, he received the William F. Prokasy Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in 1989; his influence, however, exceeded the boundaries of the classroom and he was extraordinarily generous in sharing his wealth of knowledge with anyone who sought him out. The Department accordingly named its award for outstanding teaching by an entomology graduate student in his honor.



Ellis MacLeod/Metcalf Award for Outstanding Teaching by a Graduate Student in the Department of Entomology



Annaliese Wargin

I am a PhD candidate in the Harmon-Threatt Lab studying native bees and their parasites through a community lens to evaluate how species interactions are affected by anthropogenic change. I also have a strong passion for teaching here at UIUC, and it is an honor to receive the MacLeod/Metcalf Award this year. I look forward to TAing another SIB class in the Fall!

**Congrats Entomology
Award winners!**



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Evolution, Ecology & Behavior (EEB)



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Getz Award

The **Dr. Lowell L. Getz and Mary R. Getz Undergraduate Research Award** was established by Dr. Lowell L. Getz and his wife, Mary R. Getz. Dr. Getz was a faculty member in the Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior, who provided research opportunities for hundreds of undergraduates to study the evolution of mating systems in voles. This award supports undergraduate students conducting research in any aspect of Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior.



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Getz Award



Savannah Palmer

Hello! My name is Savanna and I am a sophomore majoring in Integrative Biology Honors with minors in Chemistry and Natural Resource Conservation. This summer, I will be joining the Davis Lab to study how environmental DNA can be a tool in biodiversity conservation. This scholarship will allow me to work toward my goal of having a career in conservation biology.



Angelina Roman-Alcocer



Jenna Rosas

Edwin M. Banks Memorial Award

The Edwin Banks Memorial Fund was established by Dr. Banks' wife, Mrs. Hilda Banks, and family to honor his long and distinguished career as a faculty member in the Department of Ecology, Ethology and Evolution at the University of Illinois (1957-1985). Dr. Banks was a pre-eminent researcher in the areas of mammalian sociality and reproduction and this award was established to support research in Animal Behavior.



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Edwin M. Banks Memorial Award



Anne Aka

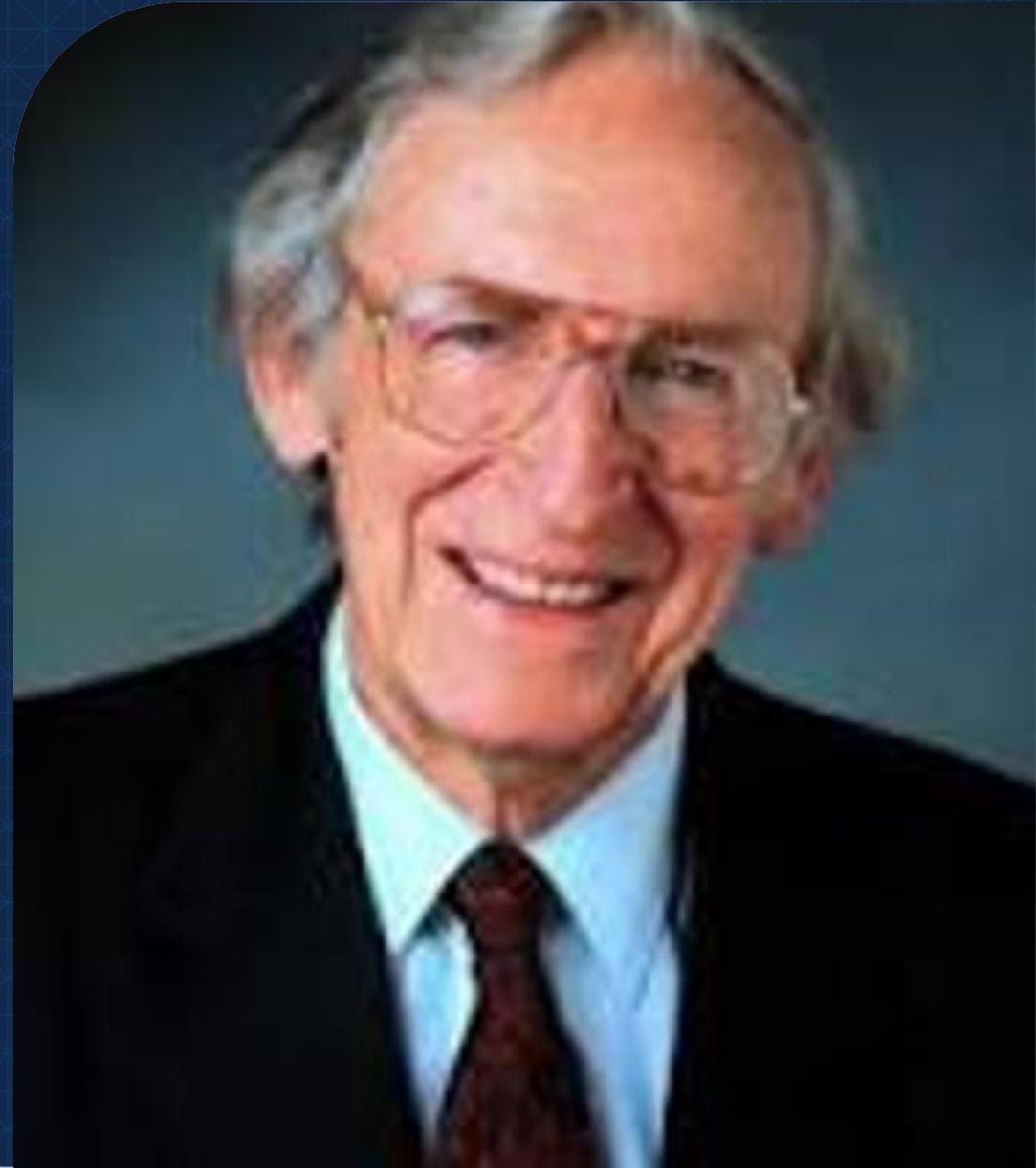
I am studying the evolution of visual systems and ultraviolet (UV) color patterns in midwestern fish. I plan to use the funding to assay the UV color vision of fish inhabiting a local Illinois stream to examine phenotypic diversity in species that share a similar visual environment but occur in different microhabitats, taxonomic groups, and predator/prey relationships. This award will help me expand on the exploration and documentation of understudied North American freshwater fish, revealing more about species-specific traits and visual communication in teleost fish.

Odum-Kendeigh Research Award

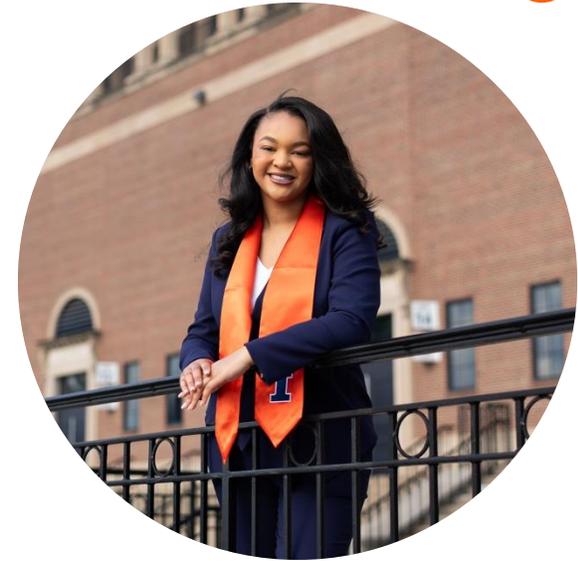
Dr. Eugene Odum is considered to be one of the fathers of modern ecology and published an influential textbook, *Fundamentals of Ecology* in 1953. Dr. Odum established the Odum-Kendeigh fund for graduate research in the fields of ecology, behavior and evolution in the Department of Animal Biology in honor of his major professor, Dr. Charles Kendeigh and the Department of Zoology from which he received his Ph.D in 1939.



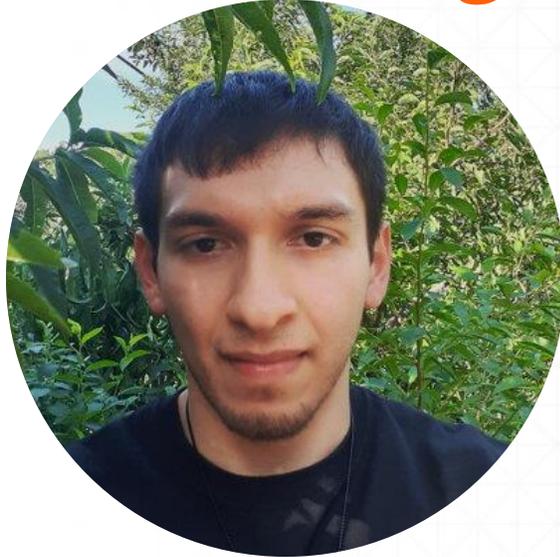
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Odum-Kendeigh Research Award



Nina Shearrill



Gio Madrigal



Shriram Bhat

I am in my 2nd year of PhD in Chris Cheng's lab, studying the evolution of Polar fishes both in the Antarctic and the Arctic. I work on their genomes using bioinformatics approaches, and plan to use the funding research to help with my computational analyses.



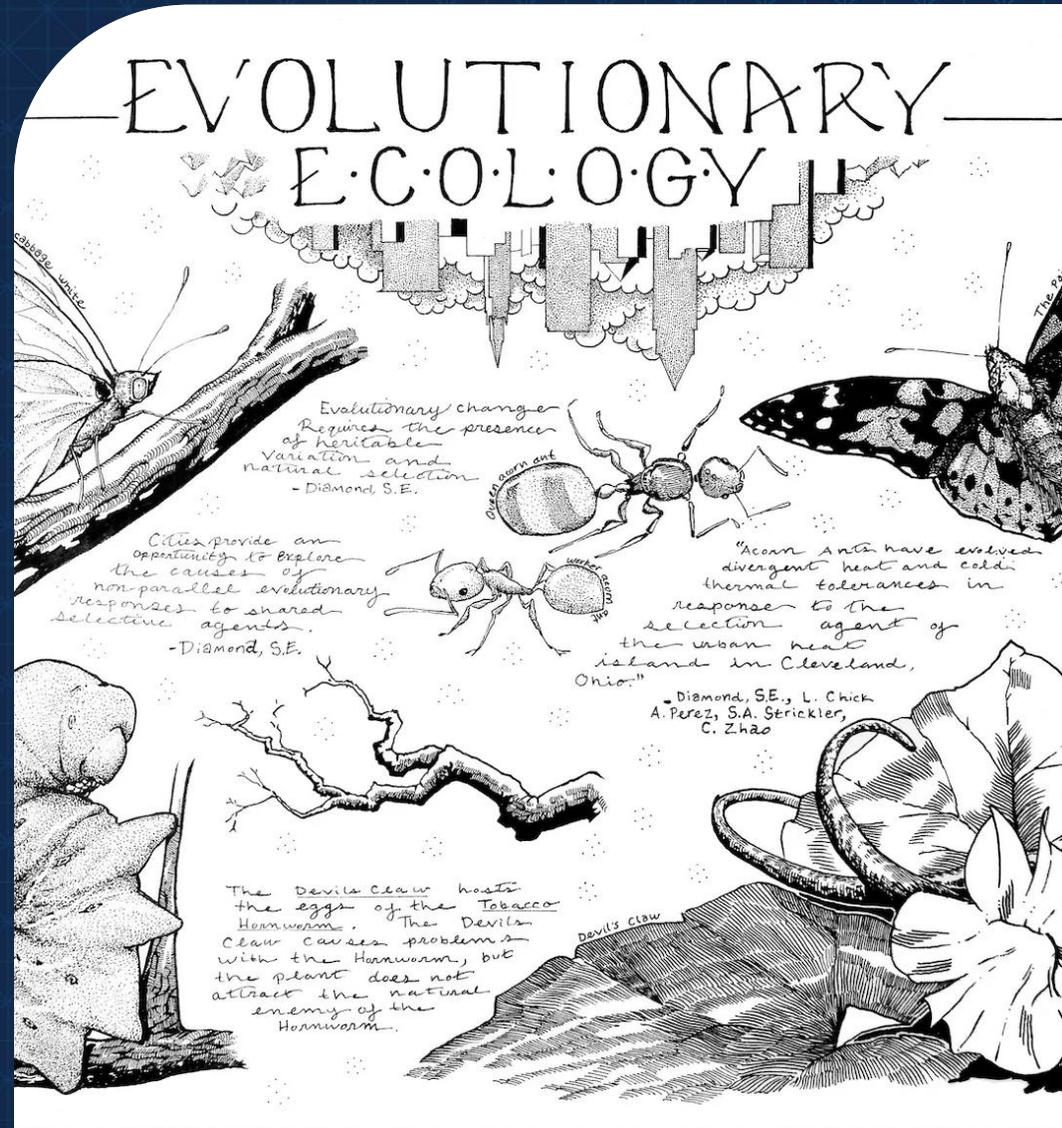
Michelle Villalobos

Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior Summer Stipend Award

The EEB Summer Stipends are made possible with support from Block Grant Funds from the Graduate College.



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EEB Stipend Award



Avi Berger

My current research investigates the material properties of avian eggshells relative to the development of the embryo during incubation. I am CT scanning developed eggs from wild birds to evaluate shell shape, structure, and embryo posture to understand the mechanics of hatching.



Mac Chamberlain

My research investigates how juvenile brood parasites develop social and species-specific behaviors in the absence of conspecific parental care. Using automated radio telemetry, I examine the spatial and social dynamics of Brown-headed Cowbirds to understand how juveniles navigate and integrate into a complex conspecific social environment.



Siqi Han

EEB Stipend Award



Avalon Feiler

I am pursuing a Master's degree in Dr. Phil Anderson's lab, specifically researching the biomechanics of flexible body armor in a family of fish called poachers. I am interested in understanding how scale morphology and interactions between scales relate to the varying directional flexibility of the fish, and hope that my findings could help in the future design of flexible joint braces.



Julia Jehn



Timothy Legare

I am a first-year PhD student in the Fuller lab, studying drivers of speciation. I am particularly interested in hybridization and behavioral isolation's role in maintaining and degrading species complexes. I am currently investigating the *Lucania killifish*, after their recent introduction into the San Francisco Bay. This award will allow me to begin sequencing killifish from the bay, so we can begin investigating and comparing their population dynamics to what we already know from Florida, their native range.

Thomas Frazzetta Award for Outstanding Teaching in Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior Biology

This award was established in honor of Dr. Frazzetta who was a passionate teacher at Illinois for 50 years. It is given to a current Evolution, Ecology, and Behavioral graduate student in recognition of their sustained excellence in teaching.



Thomas Frazzetta

Award for Outstanding Teaching in Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior Biology



Jules Chabain

I am a PhD Candidate in EEB. I enjoy teaching and researching in the area of Anatomy. I study the morphology of sting ray barbs across multiple species and their performance characteristics. I have been highly involved in teaching the anatomy (IB 303) course.

**Congrats EEB
Award winners!**



UNIVERSITY OF
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URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Plant Biology



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Harold C. and Sonja L. Labinsky Award

This fund was established in 1999 by Harold C. and Sonja L. Labinsky in memory of Harold Labinsky's father, Carl H. Labinsky, and in honor of Katherine M. Labinsky, Harold Labinsky's mother. The award is to be used to provide an annual financial gift to one or more students enrolled in the Department of Plant Biology in the College of LAS.



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Harold C. and Sonja L. Labinsky Award



Stephanie Cullum

I am a master's student in the School of Integrative Biology, conducting research in the Burgess Lab. My research focuses on understanding natural variation in photosynthetic induction in soybean, with the goal of identifying genetic regions associated with improved photosynthetic responses under fluctuating light conditions. This award will help me broaden the scope of my research, potentially supporting the evaluation of additional soybean lines or the collection of expanded data sets to strengthen my findings.



Kithmee De Silva



Yuchen Wang

My name is Yuchen and I am a second-year graduate student in Dr. Matthew Brooks lab. My research aims to uncover the critical transcription factors governing gene expression in response to nitrogen availability and CO₂ levels in various legume species.



Michelle Zambrano

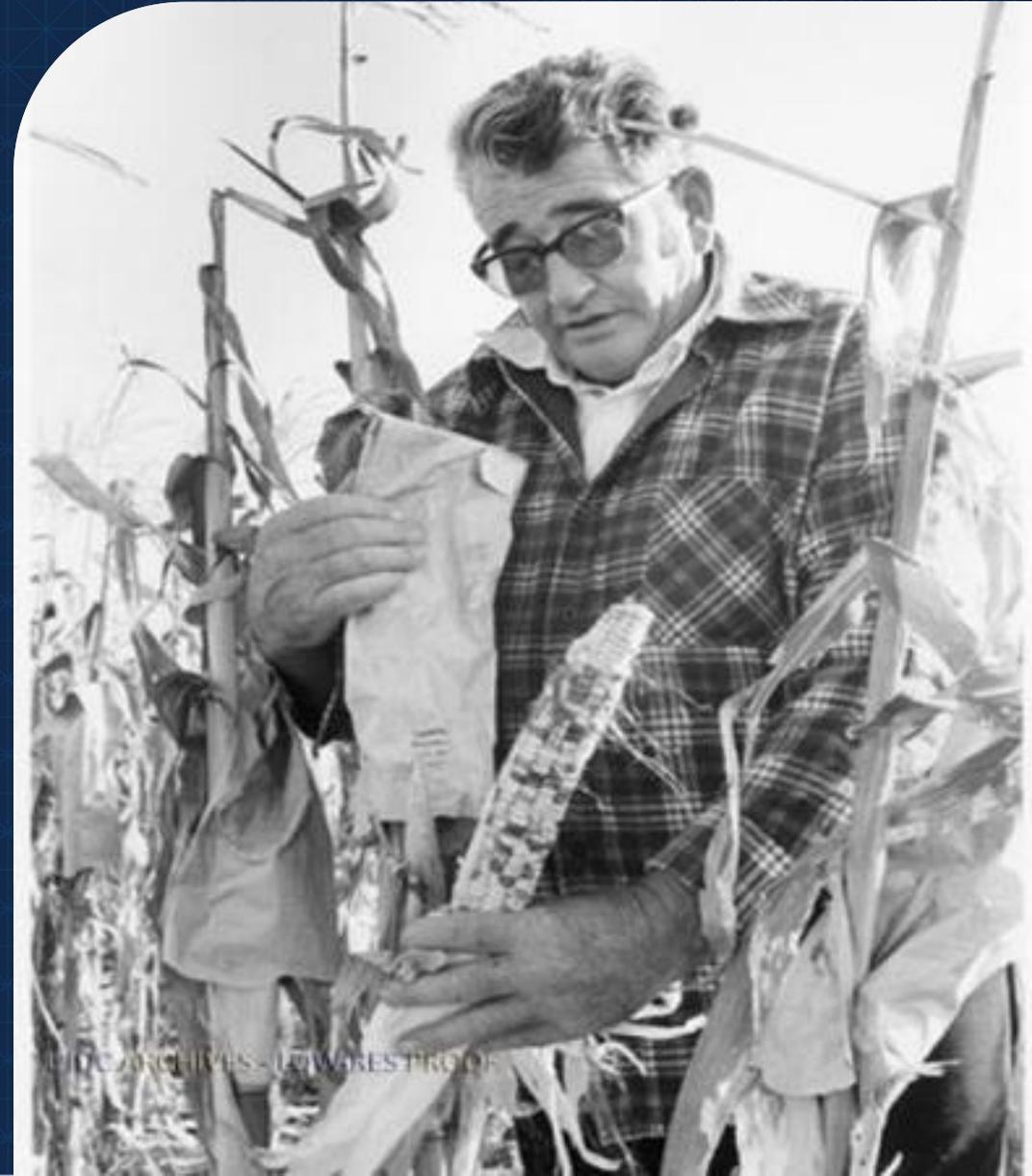
I am a third year PhD student in Lisa Ainsworth's lab studying how plants respond to environmental stresses using molecular biology, physiological, and transcriptomic techniques.

John R. Laughnan Award

These awards were endowed by John's wife and longtime collaborator, Susan Gabay-Laughnan and his fellow geneticists, friends, and colleagues in part in recognition of John's co-founding and support of the Annual Maize Meetings. John Laughnan was a member of the faculty of the University of Illinois for most of his career. He was a member of the Department of Botany and served as both its chairman and later its head. He joined the new Department of Genetics and Development but later returned to his previous department, by then called Plant Biology. He developed the original *shrunk-2* hybrids responsible for stable sweetness of popular Super-Sweet corn.



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John R. Laughnan Award



Natalie Beloso

Natalie Beloso is a graduate student in the Heath and Yang lab studying the effects of rhizobium evolution on plant communities and plant-plant interactions.



Meghan Blaszyński

I'm a second-year PhD student in the Heath Lab studying how rhizobia benefit legumes and other plants when they are in the rhizosphere and how this might alter the ecology and evolution of symbiosis.



August Lipari

In my research I aim to explore the link between polyploidy, phenotype, and drought tolerance in resurrection grass *M. caffra* through phenotyping, transcriptomics, and genome duplication.

John R. Laughnan Award



Bram Osterhout

I am a fourth-year Ph.D. student in plant biology studying post-transcriptional regulation in sorghum. I have focused my research on chemical separations and methods of using mass spectrometry for the absolute quantification of proteins. I am also involved in advocacy for politically-engaged science through my union, the Graduate Employees' Organization, and Science for the People magazine



Blaine Martin

Blaine Martin is a Ph.D. student in Dr. Jim Dalling's lab in the Department of Plant Biology at the University of Illinois. Blaine's dissertation focuses on the root associated fungi and population dynamics of *Podocarpus*, a genus of tropical conifers, and will continue fieldwork in Panamá this summer.



Simmi Rana



Ignacio Sparrow Munoz

John R. Laughnan Award



Grace Magavern

Grace Magavern is a graduate student in the Plant Biology program and in Dr. Rose A. Marks' research lab, which focuses on the evolutionary mechanisms of vegetative desiccation tolerance in resurrection plants at multiple levels of study. She is broadly interested in plant community ecology in drylands and seeks to understand how plant community structure impacts resurrection plants' fitness and resilience.



Yuchen Wang

Govindjee and Rajni Govindjee Award for Excellence in Biological Research

This award was established by Dr. Govindjee and Dr. Rajni Govindjee. Govindjee and Rajni were both UIUC PhD students of Robert Emerson. Govindjee taught at UIUC from 1961-1999 and is known as a pioneer in the area of photosynthesis research. He is currently a Professor Emeritus of Biochemistry, Biophysics, and Plant Biology. Dr. Rajni Govindjee is recognized as a distinguished photobiologist, credited with pioneering research in photosynthesis and photobiology.



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Govindjee and Rajni Govindjee Award for Excellence in Biological Research



Kithmee De Silva

I am a graduate student in the Brooks Lab in the Department of Plant Biology. My research focuses on untangling gene regulatory networks to understand how plants integrate environmental signals to coordinate photosynthesis and nitrogen use. This funding will support the addition of an epigenetics component, enabling me to explore deeper layers of genetic regulation.

Dr. Fakhri and Dr. Maarib Bazzaz Plant Biology Fund

This award was established to honor Dr. Fakhri and Dr. Maarib Bazzaz as academics, mentors, and cherished friends by supporting students in the Department of Plant Biology in at the University of Illinois. Department of Plant Biology in at the University of Illinois.



Dr. Fakhri and Dr. Maarib Bazzaz Plant Biology Fund



Sarah Chung



Lance Jones

I am looking at wild parsnip phytochemistry in the context of climate change. I will be quantifying furanocoumarins from archived and contemporary plant samples. Future work this summer will detail the ability of webworm moth to metabolize these plant toxins.

Plant Biology Summer Stipend Award



Hannah Beddow



August Lipari



Grace Magavern

Plant Biology Summer Stipend Award



Sumashini Pagaldevatti



Allanis Vera Barron

Plant Biology Award for Outstanding Teaching in Plant Biology



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Plant Biology Award for Outstanding Teaching in Plant Biology



Sarah Chung

I'm a first-year graduate student in the Burgess Lab. My research focuses on understanding the photosynthetic response of *Miscanthus* under fluctuating light conditions, with the overarching goal of optimizing photosynthesis and improving bioenergy crop yields in the field. I plan to use this award to support my research and attend conferences, where I can expand my understanding of photosynthesis and share my findings.

**Congrats Plant Bio
Award winners!**



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Teaching & Mentoring Awards



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John G. & Evelyn Hartman

Heiligenstein Award

These awards, made possible by a gift from John H. Heiligenstein, M.D. '67, in memory of his parents, honors teaching assistants, recognizing their outstanding contributions in the SIB. Dr. Heiligenstein, a pediatrician and psychiatrist, had three careers in medicine: clinician, academic pediatrician/psychiatrist, and as a pharmaceutical research physician at Eli Lilly and Company.



John G. & Evelyn Hartman Heiligenstein Award



Lauren Otolski



Aiden Schore



Erinn Dady

I am a former chef, excited to address insect-related food insecurity through the lens of chemical ecology, focusing on the effects of combinatorial stress on plant-insect interactions in crop plants. I believe access to healthy food is a human right, and I am excited to be working on issues that can improve agricultural practices. Understanding the mechanisms of plant defenses is critical to improving food production and sustainable pest management. I am studying the defense response of plants against insect herbivores and flooding stress, working with the crops tomato and maize. The impact of combined stressors is under-looked in our agricultural systems and could provide solutions for the climate-related challenges facing our food supply. The award of this research support grant will allow me to develop many concrete technical skills and grow as a scientist during the course Frontiers and Techniques in Plant Science, located at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

Sharon Gray Memorial Award

Dr. Sharon Gray received her BS in Integrative Biology in 2006 and her PhD in Plant Biology at UIUC in 2013. In addition to her outstanding science, she was an exceptional teacher and mentor for undergraduates. The award, established by her husband, Dr. RJ Cody Markelz (BS Integrative Biology 2007, PhD Plant Biology, UIUC, 2012), honors Sharon's passion for and commitment to mentoring women in science.

The Sharon Gray Memorial Award supports a post-doctoral researcher or graduate student and their undergraduate mentee.



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Sharon Gray Memorial Award



Jeannette Cullum



Emma Borop



Helene Dinehart



Ratna Karatgi

Morgan Wood

College, Campus, and National Teaching & Mentoring Awards



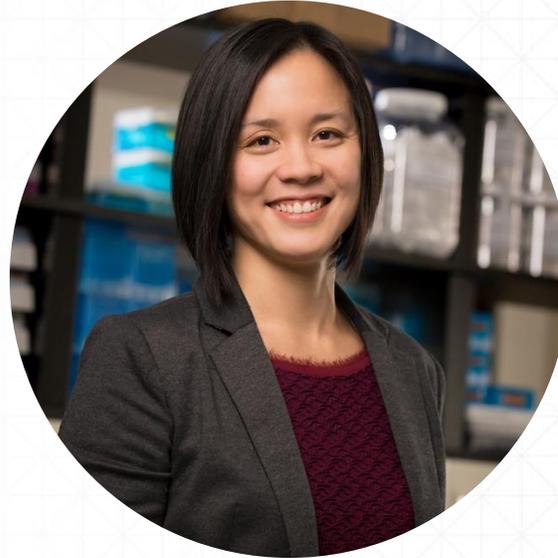
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Phil Anderson

LAS Dean's Award and
Campus Award for Excellence
in Undergraduate Teaching



Wendy Yang

Campus award for Guiding
Undergraduate Research



Andy Suarez

Executive Officer Distinguished
Leadership Award



Nick Morpew

LAS Academic Professional Award



Amy Marshall-Colon

The American Society of Plant Biologists
(ASPB) Excellence in Education

Teachers Ranked Excellent by their Students for Integrative Biology Courses Taught in Spring, Summer or Fall 2024

Spring 2024

*Adaime, M TA

*Allan, B

Anderson, N

Barley, T TA

Beddow, H TA

Behrens, C TA

Bell, A

Berenbaum, M

* Bhat, S TA

Blaszynski, M TA

Brockelsby, K TA

Chen, Y TA

Cheng -De Vries, C

Clegg, B

Coates, H TA

Cox, M TA

Dady, E TA

Dolezal, A

Enos, J

Feiler, A TA

Fuller, B

Hsieh, E TA

Jones, L TA

*Karatgi, R TA

Manaster, J

McFarland, D TA

Ngumbi, E

Noel, K TA

O'Dwyer, J

Pallo Rivadeneira, F TA

Seabloom, A TA

Singh, S TA

Weber, A TA

* Winnicki -Smith, S TA

Teachers Ranked Excellent by their Students for Integrative Biology Courses Taught in Spring, Summer or Fall 2024

Summer 2024

Manaster, J

Fall 2024

Anderson, N

*Anderson, P

*Barley, T TA

Beddow, H TA

Berger, A TA

Bielanski, J TA

Bohn, M

Brown, M TA

Calvery, J TA

Carranza, R TA

* Chabain, J TA

Chakraborty, S TA

Chen, Y TA

* Chung, S TA

Clegg, B

Cucalon Tamayo, R TA

Cullum, S TA

Dady, E TA

*Dalling, J

De Silva, K TA

* Dolezal, A

Fuller, B

Guo, L TA

Han, S TA

Hanks, L

Heath, K

Jehn, J TA

* Karakehian, J TA

Kent, A

Legare, T TA

Lipari, A TA

Ludden, C TA

Martin, D TA

Miller, A

O'Dwyer, J

Otolski, L TA

Pallo Rivadeneira, F TA

Saboowala, S TA

Fall 2024, Winter 2024 -2025

Seabloom, A

Swanson, C

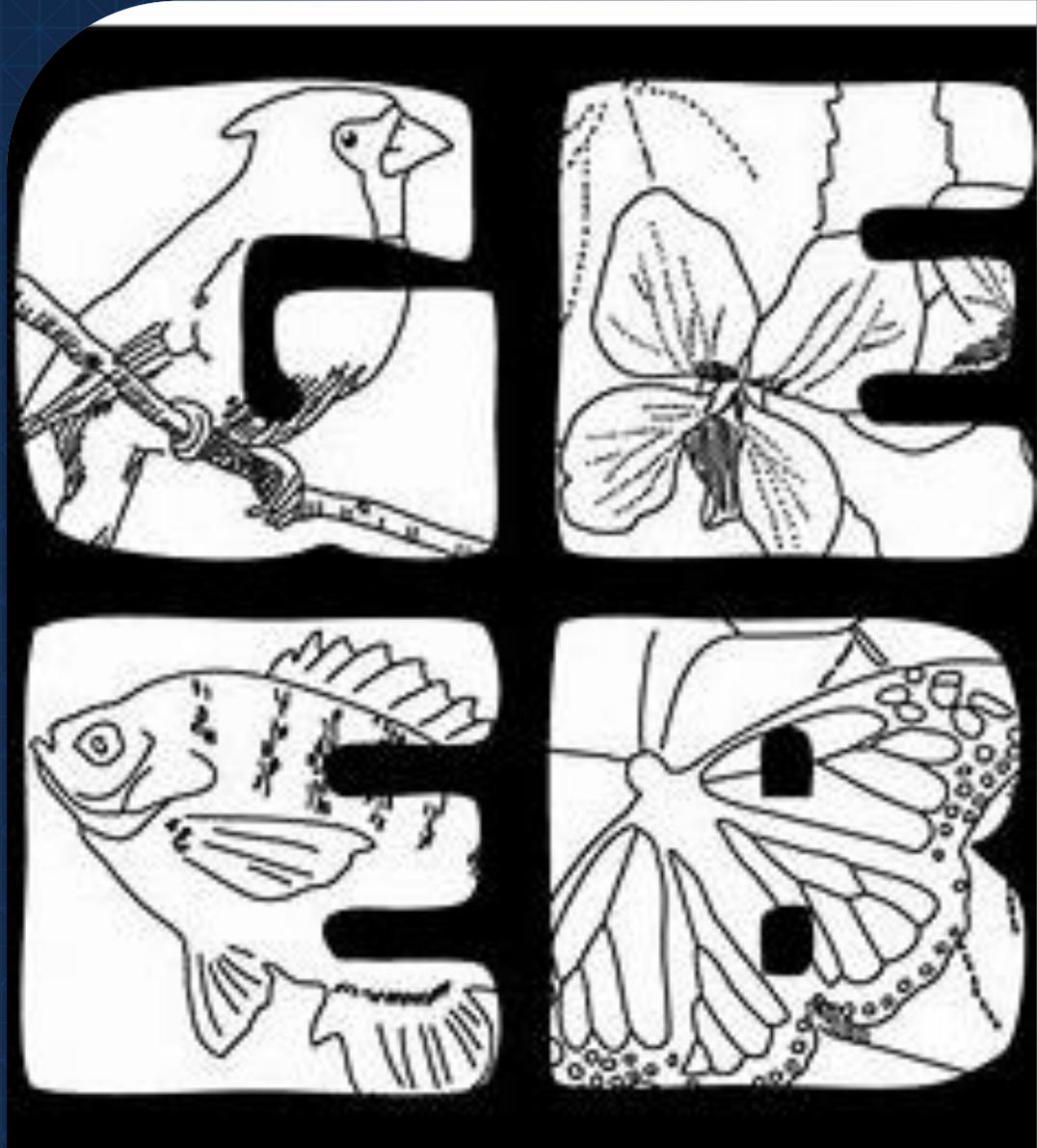
Venu, M TA

Williams, C TA

Yang, W



GEEB Symposium Awards



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GEEB Symposium



Joe Bielanski
5-minute talk Winner



Adrien Seabloom
5-minute talk Winner

GEEB Symposium



Yangkang Chen
Poster Session Winner



Simmi Rana
Poster session runner up

GEEB Symposium



Roberto Cucalon Tomayo
8- minute talk Winner



Abby Webber
8-minute talk runner up

Final Thank You!



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“That’s all Folks!”