Welcome

New Online Masters Students for Fall 2014:
Joanne Antoine, VA; Megan Averch, CO; Chasity Bedgood, NC; Kenna-Kaye Bennett, TX; Jaclyn Brown, IL; Jeffrey Carnett, Hong Kong; Brooke Dillon, NE; Courtney Dodson, OK; Karla Duncan, IL; Tomeka Ehigiator, TX; Maria Espiritu, NJ; Jessica Flippin, CO; Kimberly Gonzalez, MA; Heather Gordon, IA; Johnda Green, MO; Shela Jackson-Cimbaro, AL; Dawit Lemma, Ethiopia; Christie Lundy, MO; Andrea Lysy, MA; Michelle Maley, CA; Samantha Meske, CO; Pamela Moore, CA; John Nye, VA; Rosni Patel, NJ; Lindsey Pogline, CO; Beth Powell, NY; Ian Ray, CO; Catherine Sanders, WA; Aleen Saxton, WA; Morgan Summer, MS; Kelsey Svagera, NE; Allison Tague, IL; Natara Tisdol, FL; Clarissa Vigil, CO; Kyla Walker, Grenada; Alexandria Whidden, FL; Alexis Williams, Washington D.C.

Congratulations

Summer 2014 Graduates:
Lindsey Bowen, Robert Box, David East, Magdalena Golenia, Krystle Greene, James Daniel Hobbs, Lue Lee, Tracy Lee, Joe Rogalski, Charles Steele, Paul G. Wagner II

Four students were able to attend the UNK Summer Commencement ceremony on August 1st held in the Nebraska Student Union. Over 15 graduates, guests, and faculty attended the Department breakfast before the ceremony to honor our graduates.

Pictured left (from left to right): Dr. Paul Twigg, Professor; Dr. Julie Shaffer, Professor and Graduate Chair; Charles Steele; Lindsey Bowen; Paul Wagner; Dr. Janet Steele, Professor and Director of the Online Master’s Program
The proud graduates pose with their hard earned diplomas after graduation ceremony. Pictured below (from left to right): Magdalena Golenia; Dr. Janet Steele; Paul Wagner; Lindsey Bowen

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Publications, Meetings, Grants

**Meetings**


**Publications**


Continue to send us updates on any meetings, publications, grants, or awards that you have been involved with. Please email details to msbiology@unk.edu.

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**Director's Desk from Dr. Janet Steele**

I will be taking a sabbatical leave for the fall 2014 semester. The word sabbatical originates from the same root word as Sabbath and is a rest or break from work. The Sabbath or sabbatical year concept is described in both the Torah and the Bible as the last year in a seven-year agricultural cycle. During the sabbatical year the land must lie fallow (or "rest"), but other activities, such as watering or weeding, may be performed to preserve the land for the next year’s planting. In an academic setting a sabbatical leave is a paid absence to fulfill a goal, such as writing manuscripts or traveling for research purposes. Prior to the availability of mass-produced books, professors at universities were routinely given every seventh year off from their teaching responsibilities in order to travel and learn the newest advances in their disciplines. Nowadays faculty must request sabbatical leave and have a firm plan for their leave. A significant product (i.e., scholarly work) is also expected. I was hired at UNK fall 1993 and have never requested a sabbatical leave before, so I decided it was time to take advantage of the opportunity. In addition to directing the distance MS program, I am also responsible for teaching a two-semester anatomy and physiology course that is taken by students wishing to pursue careers in health care fields. The enrollment in this class is 200-250 students each year. While my students evaluations are consistently positive, I do not think I am incorporating new technology as well as I could. I also need to learn better ways of interacting with and engaging students in large lecture sections. My plans for my sabbatical leave are to attend the 15th Annual Conference on Case Study Teaching in Science (Buffalo, NY,
September 19-20) and the Central Regional Meeting of the Human Anatomy and Physiology Society (Minneapolis, MN, October 17-18; sessions on “Flipping” classrooms scheduled) as well as visit colleagues at the University of Texas at Austin and Augustana College (Rock Island, IL). Dr. Dee Silverthorn at UT teaches A&P in a large lecture setting (300 students) but uses interactive methods and engages the students during the lecture, while Dr. Robert Tallitsch at Augustana uses the flipped classroom technique in his neuroanatomy class. I need to see these classes for myself to understand how I might incorporate these methods into my on-campus classes here at UNK. While I won't officially step down from directing the distance program for the semester, Dr. Julie Shaffer, director of our graduate program, will take a more active part in the day-to-day operations of the program this fall. I will still manage enrollment in the BIOL 831 sequence because I have all the records of student progress through those courses.

Faculty News

Dear UNK friends, students, and colleagues,

It is with mixed emotions that I write to you to announce my departure from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. In the past 15 years, I have enjoyed many friendships and successes. One of the greatest highlights of my time at UNK was working to start the MS online Biology program in 2003. I served as director and graduate chair of the program for 7 years as it enjoyed phenomenal growth from 10 on-campus graduate students to more than 400 distance students enrolled in classes. I am very proud of the accomplishments of the more than 200 graduates of the program and of the opportunities that the program generated.

My departure from Kearney and the University of Nebraska at Kearney was a difficult one. I thrive on challenges and an opportunity became available with the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology at Oklahoma State University. The position focuses on teaching undergraduate and graduate students who are non-majors and majors. At OSU, I have the opportunity to teach in a subject that I love, and by sharing my enthusiasm, recruit students to the field. I also have the opportunity to create and guide undergraduate and graduate online programs for students.

In addition to these new opportunities and challenges, a move to Stillwater, Oklahoma allows me to continue research on the federally endangered American burying beetle (one of six states where it still occurs), and allows our family to be closer to Dr. Farnsworth-Hoback’s parents and sister who live near Oklahoma City. In essence, this is the perfect job at the right stage in my career.

I wish every one of you success in your future endeavors. Thank you for sharing some of the past 15 years with me and my family.

Sincerely, W. Wyatt Hoback
Student News

Sue A. Finstick (Summer 2010 distance graduate) co-authored "Earth and Space Science: Your Changing World", an introductory textbook that integrates Earth system science in exploring physical geology, oceanography, meteorology, and astronomy. The book, recently released in its second edition (2013), and accompanying educational materials were developed for SIRIUS Academics, a nonprofit business unit of Florida State College at Jacksonville. SIRIUS Academics courses are complete course materials packages designed to be taught in any delivery mode - fully online, hybrid/blended, or face-to-face. Sue worked as a professional geologist in Utah, Arizona, and Nevada prior to relocating to Duluth, MN. She is adjunct faculty at several universities, including Florida State College at Jacksonville, and develops and teaches online courses in biology and geology.

Michelle Hayes (current distance student) gave birth to Zoe Jane on August 13th. Zoe weighed 4 lbs 12 oz. and was delivered via C-section. (pictured right)

Please let us know what is going on in your lives; email us your news at msbiology@unk.edu.

Office Space

Fall 2014 Deadlines:
August 25th—Fall classes begin
September 15th—Last day to apply for December graduation
September 25th—Tuition & Fees due in full
October 20th-21st—Fall break, all classes dismissed
October 24th—Last day to drop a course (no refund at this time)
October 27th—Early Registration begins for all currently enrolled students
November 14th—Comprehensive Exams (for graduating students) must be returned to the Biology Dept
November 26th – 28th – Thanksgiving break, all classes dismissed
December 15th–18th – Final Exams
December 19th–Graduation

Students planning to graduate this December 2014 must apply for graduation on MyBlue. Even if you do not plan to attend ceremony you must apply in order to receive your degree. The deadline to apply for December graduation is September 15th. There is a $25 application fee which can be paid on-line during the application process. Commencement ceremony will take place at 10:00 am on December 19th in the Health and Sports Center. Please consider making the trip to Kearney to walk in graduation and if you do, please let the Biology Department know so we can plan some special events for you.
(ANOTHER) REMINDER: The Comprehensive Exam will now include questions from all courses you take in the program. Make sure you are keeping course materials so you have them to help prepare for the exam. The exam will include 50 multiple choice questions (1 point each) from the required courses: Organic Evolution, Intro to Graduate Study, Biological Statistics/Biological Perspectives, and Current Issues; 4 short essays (5 points each) related to research methods and design (learned in the Biological Research series); and 3 long essays (10 points each) from your electives (students will be given multiple essay question options from electives they've completed and must choose 3 to answer). The comprehensive exam is a requirement for graduation and should be completed in a student's final semester in the program. You must find a proctor for the exam and should submit a Proctor Form (found on the website- www.unk.edu/academics/msbio/Forms.php) 2 weeks before you plan to take the exam.

The student email system changed in May; please visit the IT Services website for more information unkcms.unk.edu/offices/its/services/office_365_students. You'll need to log into your new account in order to receive any new emails; your email address stays the same.

Marla Traupe, Office Associate for the Graduate Biology Department, has left the department. Marla graduated with her Bachelor's degree this past May and has accepted a job in Human Resources at the new Kearney Regional Medical Center. We are sad to see her go but wish her the best of luck in her new career. If you have any pending correspondence or research grant supplies/ordering please direct your inquiry to msbiology@unk.edu in the interim.