WELCOME

New Online Masters Students for Summer 2016:
Susan Bain, CO; Tonickee Banks, TN; Karli Busboom, NE; Rachel Carraher, NE; Meghan Castaneda, VA; Karen Clemons, AZ; Laura Danielczyk, IL; Jason DeFuria, NJ; Maja Dobric, GA; Maire Donnelly, NE; Csilla Elam, AL; Suzette Fanning, SD; Zachary Ferguson, WV; Erin Foss, NV; Marcus Greene, VA; Emilie Grove, MD; Ashley Hall, GA; Abby Hongsermeier, NE; Kathryn Langrehr, NE; Margaret MacLeod Blackwell, NC; Jeanine McDonnell, WA; Sarah Meriwether, TX; Roshini Mohan, PA; John Morley, NE; Kelly Neville, MD; Jocelyn Pugh, MD; Janine Rinker, CO; Pamela Rogers, NJ; James Rowland, WA; Carrie Sacks, NY; Karin Schmit, NE; Anthony Selting, NE; Jonathan Shiroma, CA; Thomas Sullivan, NE; Allison Tague, IL; Charles Toler, NC; David Topolewski, CO; Lauren Trummer, NE; Jenny Tsui, MA; Amanda Tuss, OR; Tracy Vieira, MA; Liang Wang, PA; Joshua Wiese, NE

CONGRATULATIONS

May 2016 Graduates:
Kristy Craig, Amy Gatlin, John Higley, Stephen Jones, Cyrine Kebhaj, Sarah Lehman, Camille Merck, John Nye, Miranda Ostrowski, Melissa Paquin, Amanda Penick, Rachel Pikstein, Rocco Racioppo, Todd Scripture, Carli Seaver, Jeffrey Steller, Cara Tarullo

Five graduates were able to make the journey to Kearney for the UNK Spring Commencement ceremony on May 6th held in the Health and Sports Center. Over 25 guests including graduates, their families, and Biology faculty, attended the Department breakfast before the ceremony to honor our graduates.
(pictured from left to right: Todd Scripture, Rachel Pikstein, Cyrine Kebhaj, Miranda Ostrowski, Camille Merck and Dr. Julie Shaffer, Graduate Program Chair & Interim Director of the Online MS Biology Program)

**Publications, Meetings, Grants**

**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.

---

**Student News**

**Pedro Bento (Fall 2011 graduate)** began working as a Corporate Quality Assurance Manager at Systech in Princeton, New Jersey in November 2015. He is responsible for the compliance of the organization pertaining to the brand protection and serialization solutions for the pharmaceutical industry.

**Cyrine Kebhaj (Spring 2016 graduate)** welcomed her first child! Awab was born on February 17, 2015 weighing 8 lbs 11 oz and 22 inches long (pictured left). She also received an award for her work at the College Bridge Academy from the City of Los Angeles Councilman’s Office (pictured right).

**Kendra Smith (current distance student)** graduated on December 11, 2015 with her Doctorate of Philosophy in Science and Mathematics Education degree from Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge, LA. Her dissertation was titled “Factors Associated With The Success of First-Time African American Freshmen Taking Introductory Science Lecture Courses At A Private HBCU”.

**Jaren Whisler (current distance student)** and his wife, Nicole, had their first child as well! Annika Rae was born on February 9th at 4:50 pm. She was 7 lbs and 19 inches long (pictured left).

Please let us know what is going on in your lives; email us your news at msbiology@unk.edu.
Director's Desk from Dr. Julie Shaffer

We have good news and bad news from the UNK Biology Masters Online Program. The good news is that the President of the University has awarded us funding to hire two additional faculty who will be distance specialists. We are currently interviewing potential candidates. One of those faculty will teach required classes such as research and current issues, and the other will specialize in human health related classes. You can expect to see new faces in the program this fall. Our sad news is that we are losing Dr. Saili Moghe and Dr. Casey Schoenebeck. Dr. Moghe is moving to Australia, which will be a great adventure for her. Dr. Schoenebeck is moving to a research position with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Thankfully we'll be retaining Robyn Schoenebeck as a distance coordinator; she'll just be working from a distance. We wish both Dr. Moghe and Dr. Schoenebeck well. They did a lot for the online program, and we will miss them. If either of them had been serving as your research mentor for BIOL 831, please contact me to get a new mentor before you take anymore credits.

Last quarter I also said that I would give you an update on the APR findings. We did receive some suggestions, but most were not very helpful for the online program. They did suggest that we create a strategic plan for the program. They suggested that we scale back the program, but the university wants us to scale up the program. Since the university has given us two additional faculty members, we are choosing to scale up the program but only slightly. You should have more available seats in classes, especially health related classes. They also suggested that we facilitate the creation of a student code of conduct for online students. (I have been hounding the administration to do this for years.) This is not a departmental issue, so we hope that it happens but are not able to do it ourselves. All-in-all the findings were not very satisfying. We'll be moving forward based upon our own findings from the student surveys that we did to prepare for the APR, and we hope that you will continue to send us suggestions and fill out evaluations. You're really our best help in creating a successful plan for the program. Keep up the good work and have a nice summer.

Office Space

REMINDER: It is recommended that you always use Firefox with Blackboard. Internet Explorer is no longer supported and we are experiencing issues regarding assignments with students that still use it.
Still looking to register for a class this summer? The following courses are being offered during the 3rd summer session:

**June 6-July 29 session:**
BIOL 830P-01 – Climate Change (3 hrs)
BIOL 830P-02 – Immunology (3 hrs)
BIOL 869 – Conservation of Birds and Mammals (3 hrs)
BIOL 881 – Current Issues (1 hr)

Students can register for open classes through MyBlue up until the first day of the class.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Beginning May 9th, students dropping a summer course receive a “W” on their transcript. The “W” does not calculate into GPA; it just indicates the course was dropped. Even if the class doesn’t begin until the 2nd or 3rd summer session, the student receives a “W” since the summer term has begun.

**Reminder: If you haven’t registered yet for Fall 2016 classes, we encourage you to do so ASAP.** Classes fill-up quickly so if there is a course you really want/need to take, you should register now. Fall 2016 classes begin August 22nd.

Remember, if a class you are interested in taking is full, contact Brian or Robyn at msbiology@unk.edu to be put on a waitlist. Should a spot become available you would then be contacted via your lopers email account to register.

**Planning to graduate this Summer 2016?** You will need to log-on to MyBlue and apply for July 2016 graduation. All students are required to apply for graduation even if they do not plan to attend ceremony. The deadline to apply for graduation this summer is June 15th. There is a $25 application fee that can be paid on-line when you submit your application. Commencement ceremony will be held on July 29th at 10:00 am in the Nebraskan Student Union. We hope you can make the trip to Kearney for the commencement ceremony! Since the summer semester is more condensed, graduates need to complete the comprehensive exam and have it returned to the Biology Department by July 1st. Please make arrangements with a proctor to complete your exam early in order to meet this deadline. The proctor form must be submitted to the Program Coordinators, msbiology@unk.edu, at least 2 weeks prior to taking the exam.