



Department of Biology Masters Distance Learning Program

MASTERS DISTANCE MONITOR

January 2025

Issue 50

WELCOME

New Online Masters Students for Spring 2025:

Chloe Becker, NY; Elizabeth Bennett, MO; Tiffany Blessum, CA; Jeffrey Bronstad, SC; Taylor Bruett, NE; Sheila Caongca, CA; Eugene Cherry, GA; Cassie Conley, IA; Krista Coppage, VA; Katelynn Dobbs, NE; Kimberly Evans, FL; Teara Florek, NJ; Allen Frisa, VA; Nolan Gleason, NE; Kyle Hallmark, TX; Madison Harwood, GA; Carrie Hewitt, VA; Habiba Houti, NE; Jonathan Hudson, TX; Martin Hughes, NE; Amanda Kay, TX; Kristina Kore, IL; Ashley Lithgow, MI; Celeste Mitchell, NE; Brittney Richardson, NE; Emma Rinacke, MO; Henry Robbins, IL; Ashley Sanchez, NJ; Timothy Scaduto, MA; Maria Sofia, NC; Madison Welker, NE; Joseph Wilson, SC

CONGRATULATIONS

December 2024 Graduates:

Vivian Chi, Kelsey Creamer, Andrew Domman, Emese Dunn, Alexia Edwards, Levi Fettig, Savanna Haire, Rebecca Hiatt, Michael Johnson, Michaela Jones, Torri Kling, Amanda Mackey, Lucas Malimanek, Aubrey Rodriguez, Jessica Rogers, Lauren Sheehan, Cathy Sikes, Andrea Talbot, KaJuanita Tate, Ashley Wolterstorff, Emily Woods

Five graduates were able to attend the commencement ceremony on December 20th at 10:00 am in the Health and Sports Center. UNK Online hosted a meet + greet after the ceremony. Below are some pictures from the events.



Pictured above (back row from left to right): Dr. Joe Dolence, Brian Peterson, Dr. Austin Nuxoll, Dr. Nick Hobbs, Dr. Jacob Cooper, Dr. Jayne Jonas; (front row from left to right): Michaela Jones, KaJuania Tate, Andrea Talbot, Dr. Letty Reichart, Dr. Kim Carlson



Pictured above: Dr. Letty Reichart and Michaela Jones



Pictured right: Andrea Talbot and Dr. Yipeng Sui

Grants, Meetings, Publications

Meetings

- Campanaro, C.,** Hodges, C., Drumm, M., and Hsieh, Y. September 2024. Pulmonary function profile in female and male cystic fibrosis mice. North American Cystic Fibrosis Conference. Boston, Massachusetts. Poster Presentation.
- Harner, M., T.** Gilmore, K. Johnson, J. Bajelan, K. Chapman, P. Guggilla, M. Smith, J. Stranzl Jr., C. Terry, M. Wells, and K. Wetovick. October 2024. Interdisciplinary training opportunities for students enabled by camera networks. AWRA, UCOWR, NIWR Joint Water Resources Conference. St. Louis, Missouri. Oral Presentation.
- Harner, M.** October 2024. Research and communication enabled by camera networks. EPSCoR National Conference. Omaha, Nebraska. Panelist Presentation.
- Huryn, E.A. and J.C. Cooper.** September 2024. Exploring geographic replacement between two populations of White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis* complex). Kansas Ornithological Society Annual Meeting. Lawrence, Kansas. Oral Presentation.
- Kosmicki, D.V., J.W. Paysen, C. Kruse, and **K. Geluso.** November 2024. Submergence behavior for female Ornate Box Turtle (*Terrapene ornata*) in June from southern Kansas. Annual Meeting of the Kansas Herpetological Society. Hays, Kansas. Poster Presentation. *Awarded the best ecology poster of the conference.*
- Kosmicki, D.V. and **K. Geluso.** October 2024. Seasonal distribution by month for Evening Bats (*Nycticeius humeralis*) in North America. Annual Meeting of the Central Plains Society of Mammalogists. Hays, Kansas. Poster Presentation.
- Lowe, T.C., C. Kruse, and **K. Geluso.** October 2024. Wiggling tail behaviors in grassland and shrubland rodents in the Great Plains. Annual Meeting of the Central Plains Society of Mammalogists. Hays, Kansas. Poster Presentation.
- Paysen, J.W., D.V. Kosmicki, and **K. Geluso.** October 2024. Roosts of Silver-haired Bats (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*) in riparian habitats of western Nebraska. Annual Meeting of the Central Plains Society of Mammalogists. Hays, Kansas. Oral Presentation.
- Paysen, J.W., and **K. Geluso.** November 2024. County-level distribution maps for the reptiles and amphibians of Oklahoma. Annual Meeting of the Kansas Herpetological Society. Hays, Kansas. Poster Presentation.
- Sprouse, R.** and T.D. Brooks. October 2024. Reimagining Learning Outcomes in Anatomy and Physiology. Nebraska Association of Teachers of Science Fall Conference. Kearney, Nebraska. Oral Presentation.

Publications

- Campanaro, C.,** Hodges, C., Drumm, M., and Hsieh, Y. 2024. Pulmonary function profile in female and male cystic fibrosis mice. *Journal of Cystic Fibrosis*. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1569-1993\(24\)01063-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1569-1993(24)01063-4)

- Dutta, D., Ziemke, M., Sindelar, P., Vargas, H., Lim, J.Y., and **Chandra, S.** 2024. Cytoarchitecture of Breast Cancer Cells under Diabetic Conditions: Role of Regulatory Kinases—Rho Kinase and Focal Adhesion Kinase. *Cancers*. 16(18), 3166. <https://doi.org/10.3390/cancers16183166>
- Gattoni, K., Gendron, E.M.S., McQueen, J.P., Powers, K., Powers, T.O., **Harner, M.J.**, Corman, J.R. and Porazinska, D.L. 2024. The nature of microbial diversity and assembly in the Nebraska Sandhills depends on organismal identity and habitat type. *Community Ecology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42974-024-00206-5>
- Jiang, L.Q., **Drew, B.T.**, Watchara, A., Hong Wu, H., Yue Zhao, Y., Peng, H. and Xiang, C.L. 2024. Comparative plastome analysis of Arundinelleae (Poaceae, Panicoideae), with implications for phylogenetic relationships and plastome evolution. *BMC Genomics*. 25:1016.
- Kosmicki, D.V., J.W. Paysen, C. Kruse, and **K. Geluso**. 2024. Submergence behavior in June by female ornate box turtles (*Terrapene ornata*) from southern Kansas. *Western North American Naturalist*. 84(4):11.
- Liu, Y., Zhang, F., Devireddy, A.R., Ployet, R.A., Rush, T.A., **Lu, H.**, Hassan, M.M., Yuan, G., Rajput, R., Islam, M.T., Agrawal, R., Abraham, P.E., Chen, J., Muchero, W., Martin, F., Veneault-Fourrey, C., and Yang, X. 2024. A small secreted protein serves as a plant-derived effector mediating symbiosis between *Populus* and *Laccaria bicolor*. *Horticulture Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hr/uhae232>
- Lowe, T.C., S.M. Bailey, D.D. Fogell, and **K. Geluso**. 2024. Records of the Red-bellied Snake (*Storeria occipitomaculata*) in central and northeastern Nebraska. *Transactions of the Nebraska Academy of Sciences*. 44:1-6.
- Cruikshank, M.J.**, Pitzer, J.M., Ameri, K., Rother, C.V., Cooper, K., and **Nuxoll, A.S.** 2024. Characterization of *Staphylococcus lugdunensis* biofilms through ethyl methanesulfonate mutagenesis. *AIMS Microbiology*. 10(4): 880-893. <https://doi.org/10.3934/microbiol.2024038>
- Messbarger, N.M., **D.J. Carlson, K. Geluso, and J.J. Shaffer**. 2024. Molecular detection of pathogenic bacteria in American Dog Ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*) in Brown County, Nebraska. *Transactions of the Nebraska Academy of Sciences*. 44:7-12.
- Paysen, J.W., D.D. Fogell, and **K. Geluso**. 2024. First record of the Diamond-backed Watersnake (*Nerodia rhombifer*) in Nebraska. *Transactions of the Nebraska Academy of Sciences*. 44:13-15.
- Peterson, B.C.** 2024. The Science of Antlers and When to Harvest a Velvet Buck. *Nebraskaland Magazine*. 102(7):42-45. <https://magazine.outdoornebraska.gov/stories/hunting/the-science-of-antlers-and-when-to-harvest-a-buck/>
- Peterson, B.C.**, Farrell, P.D. and Schoenebeck, C.W. 2024. Relative Fluctuating Asymmetry and Predictive Metrics of Cast Antler Pairs in White-Tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). *Symmetry*. 16(10), 1301. <https://doi.org/10.3390/sym16101301>
- Rokusek, B.S.**, Cheku, S., Rokusek, M., Waples, C.J., Harshman, L., and **Carlson, K.A.** 2024. Heat tolerance assays using the Drosophila Activity Monitor (DAM2) system: A guide to an executable application for data analysis. *JoVE*. DOI:[10.3791/67814](https://doi.org/10.3791/67814)
- Schoenebeck, C.W., **Koupal, K. D., Peterson, B. C., Uphoff, C. S., Woiak, Z., Miller, B. T., Wuellner, M. R.** and **Kreitman, J. W.** 2024. Seasonal prey taxa and size selection and drivers of age-0 walleye ontogenetic diet shifts. *Journal of Freshwater Ecology*. 39(1).
- Zebro, L.R.**, Sass, G.G., **Wuellner, M.R., and Koupal, K.D.** 2025. Evaluating the contributions and economic costs for Walleye fry and fingerling stocking in a large midwestern reservoir. *Fisheries Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2024.107207>

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.

Director's Desk from Dr. Austin Nuxoll

Greetings!

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday break and is staying warm! A few weeks ago, we wrapped up the fall semester, and five of our graduates celebrated their achievements by attending the graduation ceremony. It was such a joy to witness them being hooded at graduation and connect with them in person.

As we look ahead to the start of the spring semester, we have some exciting updates to share. Many of you are likely familiar with Brian Peterson and the contributions he has made to our online program over the years. Brian has been instrumental in its success, and we're thrilled to announce that he will now expand his role by joining the Office of Graduate Studies and Academic Innovation (OGSAI) as an Online Coordinator & Academic Coach. In this role, Brian will split his time between our department and OGSAI, working on initiatives that will enhance the experience of all UNK online students.

This semester, UNK will continue its Early-Term Grading initiative, which helps students better understand their academic performance in their courses. Early-term grading will close on March 4th, and these grades will be available on MyBlue. Remember, graduate students must earn a grade of "C" or better for a course to count toward their degree and maintain an overall "B" average. Additionally, be mindful of course start and end dates as we are offering 8-week courses again this semester. If you need to add an additional class later in the semester, we are offering Biol 887 – Fisheries Ecology (March 24 – May 15) as an 8-week option.

Lastly, if you find that a class is full, please don't hesitate to email msbiology@unk.edu or me directly at nuxollas@unk.edu to be placed on a waitlist. As the semester gets underway, feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Wishing everyone a fantastic semester ahead!
Dr. Nuxoll



Faculty News

Dr. Jacob Cooper, Assistant Professor, gave a keynote talk at the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union meeting in McCook, Nebraska in September.

Student News

Babylon Anderson (May 2022 graduate) was accepted to dental school. She will begin in August 2025 at High Point University Workman School of Dental Medicine class of 2029.



Lynn Fantelli (May 2014 graduate) is an adjunct biology instructor at her local community college. She began teaching Biology of Organisms this past fall semester and teaches General Biology.

Gavin Fitzgerald (December 2023 graduate) and his wife had a baby girl, Elizabeth, in February (pictured left). For the last year and a half, he has guest lectured at Morgan Community College in Colorado, and this spring semester will teach BIO 1010, Biology Foundations. He also helps teach an astronomy research group looking at binary stars.

Lindsay Vivian (December 2010 thesis graduate) is an Environmental Program Manager and leads an office of biologists in the Caltrans (California Department of Transportation) District 4 office in Oakland. They cover the Bay Area and environmentally clear and permit

roadway projects, such as bridge and culvert replacements, as well as fish and wildlife crossings.

Tonya Welch (current student) welcomed her first grandchild, Lane Hatton George, on October 2nd. (pictured right)



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

Office Space

Spring 2025 Deadlines:

January 21st–Spring classes begin

January 24th–Last day to add/drop full semester class on MyBlue with no penalty

January 30th–E-bill notifications sent to Lopermail account

February 1st–Last day to apply for May graduation

February 15th–Last day to apply for Current Student Scholarship on MyBlue

February 20th–Tuition & Fees due in full

March 4th–Early Term Grading Closes

March 16th–23rd–Spring break, all classes dismissed

March 31st–Early Registration for Summer and Fall 2025 classes begins for all currently enrolled students

April 8th–General Registration for Summer and Fall 2025 classes begins for all admitted students
April 13th–Comprehensive Exams (for graduating students) are due to the Biology Dept
April 15th–Summer 2025 graduation application opens on MyBlue
April 18th–Last day to drop a full semester course on MyBlue (no refund at this time)
May 12th–15th–Finals Week
May 16th–Commencement ceremony at 10:00 am in the Health and Sports Center
May 19th–Summer 2025 term begin
May 20th–Deadline for faculty to submit final grades for spring classes

Students planning to graduate this May 2025 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 spring graduation is **February 1st**. 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 May 16th 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.

Field Study Opportunity

In Spring 2025 we will be offering a Regional Field Study (BIOL 856P) course to Big Bend National Park. Below is some additional information about the course. Travel arrangements should be coordinated in advance with the instructor, Dr. Bryan Drew. If you are looking to register for the course, it is listed as “Off Campus”, instead of “Web Based”. Enrollment is by permission of instructor only; email Dr. Drew at drewbt@unk.edu for permission or with questions.

Trip Dates: March 15th-23rd (spring break week) 2025

Course Description (2 units):

This course will be a field class at Big Bend National Park in Texas led by Dr. Bryan Drew and Dr. Jayne Jonas. The trip will combine camping, hiking, botany, entomology, and birdwatching, amongst other things. Prior to the field trip, in order to familiarize yourself with Big Bend, we will ask you to prepare a short presentation with a couple fellow students that you will informally present during the trip. We will camp in tents at the group campground at Cottonwood Campground and spend our days hiking and exploring various areas of the park.

Online students have the option of meeting us in Kearney and driving down with us, driving yourselves, or flying into Midland-Odessa airport and having us pick you up on March 16th dropping you off by 1pm on March 23rd.

Course Objectives:

1. -- Gain an appreciation for the biodiversity of southwest Texas
 2. -- Learn about SW ecology and ecosystems
 3. -- Learn about common plants and animals of the Chihuahuan desert
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Who We Are

The University of Nebraska at Kearney's Graduate Student Association was established in 2023 to provide a community of like-minded graduate students from all programs. GSA represents graduate students to the Graduate Council, the UNK campus, and the University of Nebraska system. This organization seeks to advocate for, inform, and connect students during their time as Lopers, whether they are online or in-person.

Get Connected!

- Grow your network with faculty, staff, and peers from programs across campus and the NU system (UNO, UNL, UNMC).
- Build a community with online and in-person students from around the world.
- Access to professional development opportunities tailored for busy graduate students.
- Discover an array of resources designed to support your academic journey.
- Advocate for fellow graduate students while having your own voice be heard at the university level for tangible impact.
- Contact UNK's GSA via email to learn more about the Executive Team.

Join GSA Today!

Who can join?

- All graduate students, both online and in-person, including students enrolled in UNK's accelerated programs, provided they are currently enrolled in a graduate course.

Why join?

- Enhance your resume
 - Get involved
 - Minimal time commitment
-
- Scan the QR code to join our Canvas page!



Connect With Us

