

# MASTERS DISTANCE MONITOR

January 2024

Issue 47

## WELCOME

### **New Online Masters Students for Spring 2024:**

Carter Black, KS; Amanda Buckwalter, KS; Richard Cassalata, AZ; Hannah Craig, GA; Tom Flanagan, WA; Aimie Hok, FL; Kelvin Hong, NE; David Horn, CO; Erika Karassik, CA; Nikolaus Levin, MO; Maria Liporacci, FL; Jordany Martinez Rosario, FL; Elton Ndreu, NJ; Brian Oliver, IL; Faith Omage, MD; Devin Ortega, CA; Christopher Pagano, KS; Paige Pastemack, VA; Chadwick Pyle, FL; Nina Quach, IL; Laura Regnery, IL; BaileyAnne Rockey, PA; Kaitlyn Roe, VA; Lynne Rositano, OH; Katlyn Ross, MO; Angela Scott, OK; Jesse Shaich, CO; Geoffrey Stillwell, MO; Aimee Switzer, VA; Jeffrey Tyson, MN; Mason Warren, KS

### **New Online Faculty**



Dr. Nate Eidem joined the Biology Department in August 2023. He was previously a lecturer in the Geography Department at UNK, where he taught remote sensing, environmental conservation and natural hazards courses. His research interests lie in the areas of environmental resources planning and management and social ecological resilience. Dr. Eidem teaches BIOL 881-Current Issues and will teach BIOL 823-Environmental Biology this summer.

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# NEWSFEED

Dr. Kim Carlson, Professor of Biology, was honored this past fall as a 2023 Sigma Xi Fellow. Below is an excerpt from an article written in University of Nebraska News; for full article click on the following link: [unknews.unk.edu/2023/11/14/unks-kim-carlson-honored-as-sigma-xi-fellow-a-first-for-the-university](https://unknews.unk.edu/2023/11/14/unks-kim-carlson-honored-as-sigma-xi-fellow-a-first-for-the-university)

## UNK's Kim Carlson honored as Sigma Xi Fellow, a first for the university



By TODD GOTTULA  
UNK Communications

KEARNEY – University of Nebraska at Kearney biology professor Kim Carlson has been honored as a 2023 Sigma Xi Fellow, marking a historic first for the university.

She was recognized during the recent International Forum on Research Excellence in Long Beach, California.

Sigma Xi, the global honor society of science and engineering professionals, selects fellows for their contributions to research, outreach, education, mentorship and leadership. Carlson's selection into the cohort of 18 esteemed members nationwide underscores her exceptional contributions and commitment to scientific excellence, said Allen Thomas, UNK chemistry professor and Sigma Xi's northwest region associate director.

“Kim’s impact on our chapter cannot be overstated – she is the glue holding it all together,” Thomas said. “Kim has consistently been a major driver of our success, spearheading many of our events.”

Carlson has been instrumental in bridging the gap between science and the community through initiatives such as Science Cafes. During her tenure as president of UNK’s Sigma Xi chapter from 2010-15, and earlier as vice president in 2007, she pioneered these events that offer informal presentations on scientific topics in local bars and coffee shops.

“Kim is highly passionate about promoting Sigma Xi on our campus, and she tirelessly puts her time on the line for our chapter,” said Thomas.

Since joining UNK in 2003, Carlson’s excellence in teaching, research and service has been recognized through numerous awards, including all three of UNK’s Pratt-Heins Foundation Awards and the university’s most prestigious faculty award.

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# **CONGRATULATIONS**

## **August 2023 Graduates:**

John Becker, Joanna Berry, Vu Dang, Gavin Fitzgerald, Candace Irby, Kate Anna Jones, Kathryn Menezes, Brandee Meyer, Celeste Mildenstein, Jacob Muldoon, Kyle Myers, Leigh Ann Nicolella, Amanda Norvilas, Nathan Ortiz, Erin Rogers, Jerolyn Seaborn, Angela Soelberg, Candice Spivey, Maria Vasquez, Hannah Yucht

Six graduates were able to attend the commencement ceremony on December 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am in the Health and Sports Center. UNK Online hosted a meet and greet for graduates immediately following ceremony in the HPER gym. Online graduates, along with their guests, and biology faculty were able to stop by for some refreshments and meet each other in person.



Pictured above, back row from left to right: Dr. Bryan Drew, Brian Peterson, Dr. Joe Dolence, Dr. Nick Hobbs, Gavin Fitzgerald, Dr. Todd Bartee, and Dr. Keith Geluso; front row from left to right: Dr. Letty Reichart, Dr. Melissa Wuellner, Angela Soelberg, Candice Spivey, Erin Rogers, Amanda Norvilas, Candace Irby





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# Grants, Meetings, Publications

## Meetings

Kreikemeier, A. and **G.J. Pec**. October 2023. Corn productivity does not decline in soils invaded by redroot pigweed. American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and the Soil Science Society of America joint International Annual Meeting. St. Louis, Missouri. Oral Presentation.

## Publications

Bellis, J., Osazuwa-Peters, O., Maschinski, J., Keir, M., Parsons, E.W., Kaye, T.N., Kunz, M., Possley, J., Menges, E., Smith, S.A., Roth, D., Brewer, D., Parsons, L., Brumback, W., Lange, J., Niederer, C., Turner-Skoff, J.B., Bontrager, M., Braham, R., Coppoletta, M., Holl, K., Williamson, P., Bell, T., **Jonas, J.L.**, McEachern, K., Roberston, K.L., Birnbaum, S.J., Bishop, A., Bittner, T., Dattilo, A., Dollard, J., Fant, J., Guerrant, E., Kishida, W., Lesica, P., O'Dell, R., Link, S.O., Pavlovic, N., Pollack, C., Poole, J., Reemts, C.M., Stiling, P., Taylor, D.D., Titus, J., Titus, P., Heineman, K.D., Albrecht, M. 2023. Identifying predictors of reintroduction success in rare plant species. *Conservation Biology*. [doi.org/10.1111/cobi.14190](https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.14190)

- Gravenhof, D. A., M. R. Wuellner,** M. J. Fincel, and C. W. Goble. 2023. Evaluation of two surgery techniques for surgical implantation of acoustic transmitters in juvenile Chinook Salmon *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*. *The Prairie Naturalist*. 55: 77 – 84.
- Kessler, A., **L. Dietrich, M. Wuellner, and K. Koupal**. 2023. Fish use of artificial and natural habitats in a borrow pit. *The Prairie Naturalist*. 55:34 – 42.
- Koupal, K. D.,** M. Miller, and **M. R. Wuellner**. 2023. Examination of Muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy*) overwinter survival and growth in an earthen extensive culture pond. *North American Journal of Aquaculture*. [doi.org/10.1002/naaq.10311](https://doi.org/10.1002/naaq.10311)
- Mason, B. E., K. D. Koupal, M. R. Wuellner,** and J. W. Kreitman. 2023. Behind the berms: A comparison of water quality parameters and zooplankton communities between coves of varying connection to Harlan County Reservoir, Nebraska. *Lake and Reservoir Management*. [doi.org/10.1080/10402381.2023.2270933](https://doi.org/10.1080/10402381.2023.2270933)
- Peterson, B. C.,** and C.W. Schoenebeck. 2023. Age-Specific Distance between White-tailed Deer Cast Antler Pairs. *The Prairie Naturalist*. 55: N1-N6.
- Rokusek, B.S.,** Cheku, S., Rokusek, M., Waples, C.J., Harshman, L., and **Carlson, K.A.** 2023. HoTDAM! An Easy-to-Use Automated Assay Expands the Inducible Thermotolerance Phenotype in *Drosophila melanogaster*: Heat Hardening Reduces Motility. *Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology Part A: Molecular and Integrative Physiology*. 286:111522. [doi.org/10.1016/j.cbpa.2023.111522](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cbpa.2023.111522)
- Rajput, S., Vininski, M.S.,** Lehmann, L., **Hobbs, N.J., and Dolence, J.J.** 2023. Androgen receptor signaling protects male mice from the development of immune response to peanut. *American Journal of Clinical and Experimental Immunology*. 12(4): 60-71.
- Schroeder, R.W.R., **Jonas, J.L.,** Grant-Hoffman, M.N., and Paschke, M.W. 2023. Soil seed bank composition and spatial distribution in a cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum* L.) dominated rangeland in Colorado, U.S.A. *Western North American Naturalist*. 83(2): 191-206. [doi.org/10.3398/064.083.0205](https://doi.org/10.3398/064.083.0205)
- Wallick, S., **M. Wuellner,** and **K. Koupal**. 2023. Spatial and temporal differences in fish communities following dewatering of an irrigation canal. *The Prairie Naturalist*. 55:23 – 33.
- Wilson, B., **Dietrich, L,** and **B. C. Peterson**. 2023. Phenology of antler velvet shedding in white-tailed deer from central Nebraska. *Western North American Naturalist*. 83(4): 435-444.

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](mailto:msbiology@unk.edu).

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## **Director's Desk from Dr. Austin Nuxoll**

Greetings!

I hope everyone is staying warm! As we get ready to start the semester, we have some exciting news to share. Dr. Kim Carlson has been appointed to Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research and Creative Activity. Dr. Carlson has been heavily involved in our distance MS Biology program for nearly 20 years. She has taught many of our genetics and bioethics course offerings. Dr. Melissa Wuellner will be stepping into a new role and serving as co-chair of the Biology department. Dr. Wuellner joined UNK Biology Department in 2017 and has frequently taught courses related to fish and wildlife for our distance students. In other campus news, Chancellor Kristensen has announced his retirement at the end of the spring term after serving for 22 years in this role.

We continue to see popularity in our 8-week course offerings so we will continue to offer these options moving forward. This spring, we are offering Issues in Bioethics and a section of Current Issues in Biology as an 8-week option. In the fall, we will have four courses that will run during an 8-week session: Fire Ecology & Management in Grasslands, Human Dimensions, Neglected Tropical Diseases, and Forensic Biology.

I want to remind everyone that if a class is full, you can email [msbiology@unk.edu](mailto:msbiology@unk.edu) or me, at [nuxollas@unk.edu](mailto:nuxollas@unk.edu) to be placed on a waitlist. As classes get underway, do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I hope everyone has a great semester!

Dr. Nuxoll

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## Faculty News



**Dr. Jacob Cooper, Assistant Professor of Biology**, gave a talk at University of Nebraska Lincoln on October 25<sup>th</sup> entitled “Niche ecology, distributional ecology, and diversification in vertebrate communities. He also gave a talk at #AccessCAS at UNK entitled “Different Perspectives on Modern Biogeography”. “#ACCESSCAS is a new series of invited talks, performances, and demonstrations highlighting faculty and student work advancing our understanding of inclusive excellence in the College of Arts & Sciences.” (pictured left)

**Brian Peterson, Online MS Biology Program Coordinator**, received the KUDOS Award in December. “KUDOS awards recognize university staff for their professional expertise, service and “superior dedication” to UNK and the University of Nebraska.” This is the highest award a staff member can receive. See link for the full article written in the University of Nebraska News:

[unknews.unk.edu/2023/12/05/brian-peterson-receives-kudos-award-from-nu-board-of-regents/](https://unknews.unk.edu/2023/12/05/brian-peterson-receives-kudos-award-from-nu-board-of-regents/)  
(pictured right)





**Dr. Melissa Wuellner, Associate Professor of Biology,** was elected chair of the American Fisheries Society Education section. (pictured left leading the Education section meeting at the August 2023 AFS annual meeting held in Grand Rapids, Michigan). She was also selected in September as a 2023-25 NU DEAL (University of Nebraska Developing Excellence in Academic Leaders) fellow. See the following link for additional information about this program: [unknews.unk.edu/2023/09/11/unk-faculty-members-selected-for-systemwide-leadership-development-program/](https://unknews.unk.edu/2023/09/11/unk-faculty-members-selected-for-systemwide-leadership-development-program/). In January, she was appointed as Interim Co-chair for Biology Department with Dr. Kim Carlson moving into her leadership role on campus as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research and Creative Activity.

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## Student News



**David Calderwood (current online student)** from Kenosha, Wisconsin, stopped by the UNK Biology Department for a quick hello in September, on the way to Salt Lake City, to drop his son off at college. He was able to meet with a couple of his instructors, Dr. Cooper and Dr. Reichart. (pictured left)

**Mikaya Franklin (current online student)** travelled from Fayetteville, Georgia to Omaha, Nebraska this summer for a family reunion. While in the state she stopped by UNK for a tour of campus and met with Biology professors and staff. (pictured right with Dr. Jonas)



**Nicole Miller (May 2006 graduate)** is currently working on her next graduate program, an Ed. Specialist degree in science education leadership at University of Nebraska Lincoln. She is one of the first cohorts of the Noyce Master Teacher Fellows program. The latest Nebraska Science newsletter has an article about her classroom and teaching and in it she also talks about her experience in the Biology Distance program at UNK. Having a master's degree was a prerequisite for acceptance into her current program and she is



grateful for the great foundation in content and graduate level academic reading and writing that her UNK MS in Biology gave her. Here is a link to the article: [newsroom.unl.edu/announce/nebraska-science/16211/89375](https://newsroom.unl.edu/announce/nebraska-science/16211/89375).

**Garrett Rowles (December 2019 thesis graduate)** recently accepted a position as an Area Fish Biologist with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**Logan Zebro (current thesis student)** was accepted to a PhD assistantship in fisheries science at South Dakota State University that begins in summer 2024.

Please let us know what is going on in your lives; email us your news at [msbiology@unk.edu](mailto:msbiology@unk.edu).

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## Office Space

### Spring 2024 Deadlines:

January 22<sup>nd</sup>–Spring classes begin

January 26<sup>th</sup>–Last day to add/drop full semester class on MyBlue with no penalty

February 1<sup>st</sup>–Last day to apply for May graduation

February 1<sup>st</sup>–E-bill notifications sent to Lopermail account

February 22<sup>nd</sup>–Tuition & Fees due in full

March 10<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup>–Spring break, all classes dismissed

April 1<sup>st</sup>–Early Registration for Summer and Fall 2024 classes begins for all currently enrolled students

April 9<sup>th</sup>–General Registration for Summer and Fall 2024 classes begins for all admitted students

April 14<sup>th</sup>–Comprehensive Exams (for graduating students) are due to the Biology Dept

April 15<sup>th</sup>–Summer 2024 graduation application opens on MyBlue

April 19<sup>th</sup>–Last day to drop a course on MyBlue (no refund at this time)

May 13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup>–Finals Week

May 17<sup>th</sup>–Commencement ceremony at 10:00 am in the Health and Sports Center

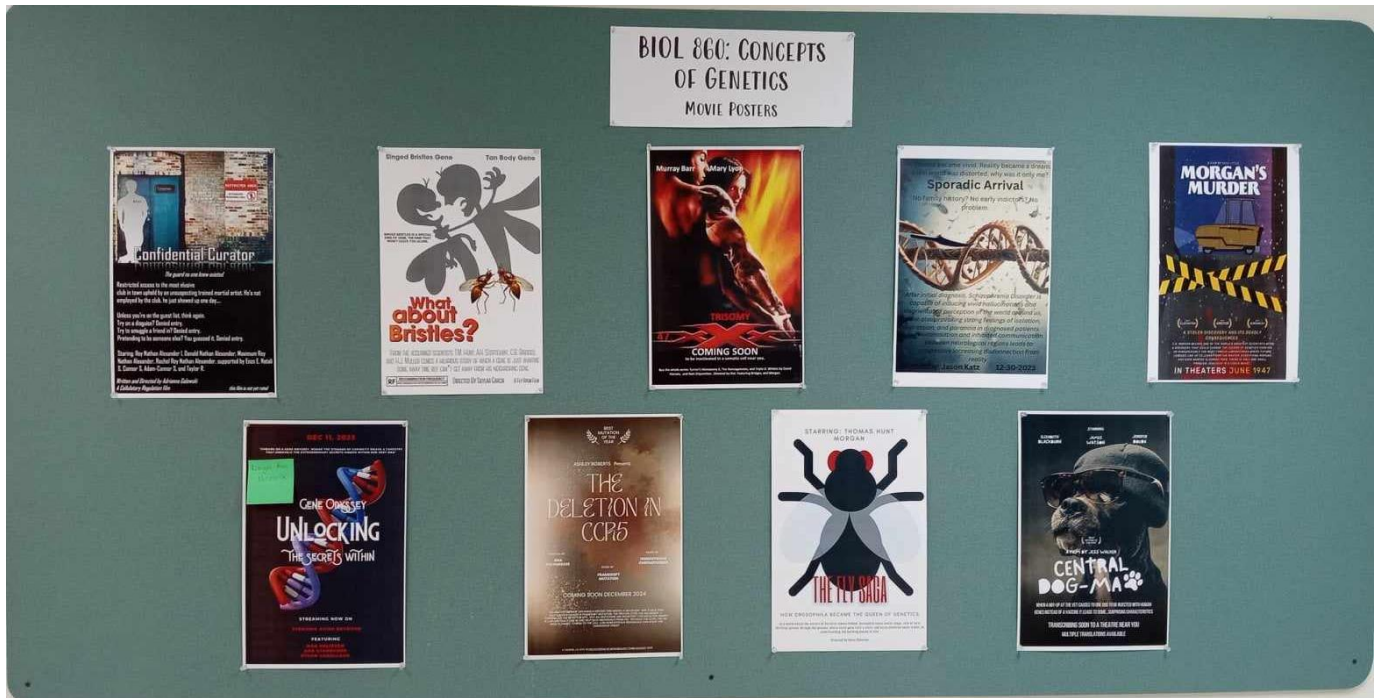
May 20<sup>th</sup>–Summer 2024 term begin

May 21<sup>st</sup>–Deadline for faculty to submit final grades for spring classes

### **Students planning to graduate this May 2024 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 1<sup>st</sup>. 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

Students enrolled in BIOL 860-Concepts of Genetics this past fall had the opportunity to create a poster or a public service announcement based on a concept learned in the class. They were all so great that Dr. Carlson posted them in the hallway of Bruner Hall (picture below).



Brian Peterson, Coordinator-MS Biology Online program, hosted a booth at the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) national conference in Kansas City in October. He was happy and excited to see the many current and past students that stopped by the booth to say hello. Some pictures from the event are below.



Pictured right: Abby Brehm, current student



Pictured below: Andrea Miller, MSE STEM (Biology) May 2020 graduate

Pictured above: Cheryl Grant, former non-degree (Biology) student



Pictured left: Seth Ehlers, July 2018 graduate

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## Field Study Opportunity

In Spring 2024 we will be offering a Regional Field Study (BIOL 856P) course to Big Bend National Park, for 2 credits from March 4<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>. Below is some additional information about the course. The trip is from March 9-17 (spring break week) and travel arrangements should be coordinated in advance with the instructor, Dr. Bryan Drew. You must be physically fit and capable of hiking 6-8 miles a day on uneven terrain. Students will camp the entire trip so you will need a sleeping bag and tent at a minimum (although we might have tents available for use); boots are also highly recommended since much of the time will be spent with cactus and other thorny plants. 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](mailto:drewbt@unk.edu) for permission or with questions.

**Trip Dates:** March 9<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> (spring break week) 2024

### Course Description (2 units):

During this course we will travel to Big Bend National Parks in Texas. 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, a short paper will be due. We will camp in tents at the group campground at Cottonwood Campground and spend our days hiking in 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 10<sup>th</sup>.

### 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

Date	Activity
March 9 <sup>th</sup>	Leave Kearney early morning (8:30am), spend evening at motel in Lamesa, Texas.
March 10 <sup>th</sup>	Leave early morning for Big Bend National Park; Camp at Big Bend Nat. Park in Cottonwood Campground group camp
March 11 <sup>th</sup>	Go to Visitor center & Rio Grande area (W) of Park; Lecture on Rio Grande Ecology; Camp at Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend
March 12 <sup>th</sup>	Explore Chihuahuan desert and discuss Chihuahuan desert ecology. Camp at Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend
March 13 <sup>th</sup>	Visit the Chisos Mountains and hike; Camp at Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend

March 14 <sup>th</sup>	Visit western portion of Park; students will do exercise on the effects of slope/aspect on desert vegetation; Camp at Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend
March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Hike into the Chisos Mountains to Emory Peak (7,825 ft). Will bring lots of water! Camp at Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend
March 16 <sup>th</sup>	Explore Southern portion of Big Bend; Camp at Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend
March 17 <sup>th</sup>	Depart early (6:30am) for Kearney; arrive in Kearney about 11pm.