



BIOSPHERE

The Weekly Bulletin of Biology

Finals

Good luck with finals and have a safe and reinvigorating summer. *Biosphere* will resume at the beginning of fall.

Changes to Spring 2015 Graduation Ceremonies

The commencement ceremonies have changed this year. Graduating seniors (but not graduating graduate students) in the five departments (including Biology) in the College of Science and Mathematics will share a commencement ceremony with the College of Engineering and Computer Science and the College of Humanities on the Oviatt Library lawn at 6 pm on Monday, 18 May. Graduate students from our department (and all others except those in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences) will have a separate commencement ceremony, which will be held on the Oviatt Library lawn at 6 pm on Friday, 15 April. The Honors Convocation (for undergrads and graduate students graduating with a minimum GPA of 3.5 or other special honors) will take place at 8 am on Friday, 15 April in the same location. Please support Biology grads by attending all three events!

MS Thesis Defense

Joshua Sausner will defend his Master's Thesis, "Ecomorphology of Storm-Petrels along the Pacific Coast of the Americas" at 10 am on Wednesday, 13 May in CR 5201. All are welcome.

Sigma Xi Winners

Last Friday, our local chapter of Sigma Xi hosted a research symposium for students who work in STEM fields. Thirty-four talks were given in four sessions. The following students from Biology won prizes for their presentations:

- **Mohammad Ehsani-Nia** (1st Place Session I): "Hematopoietic stem cell gene therapy and selection strategy against HIV"
- **Jun Yan** (1st Place Session III): "TCR engineering of NK cells for melanoma treatment"
- **Erica M. Holdridge** (1st Place Session IV): "Effects of nutrient enrichment on the eco–evolutionary dynamics of species in a natural microcosm community"
- **Courtney Button** (2nd Place Session I): "Does seaweed benefit from sea hare grazing?"

- **Andrew Oliver** (2nd Place Session III):
“Comparative genomics and epigenetics of six strains of *Sporosarcina ureae*”
- **Tess Renahan** (3rd Place Session III):
“Dissecting the teratogenic effects of an insect host pheromone in *Pristionchus pacificus* embryos”
- **Alexa Mutti** (3rd Place Session IV):
“Invasive green crabs on the rise in Maine: implications for community structure”

Other Biology students who presented were **Maria Akopyan, Jessie Buth, Lorenzo Del Castillo, Bassam Jamalalail, Girar Kolakian, Joseph Long, Jessie Lopez, Tess Renahan, Darren Sarte, Benjamin Trammell, and Shahab Younesi.**

Treefrog & Gecko Grants Funded

Dr. **Jeanne Robertson** received a *Waitt Grant* for \$15,000 from the National Geographic Society for her project on: “Documenting speciation in action: does female mate choice lead to speciation in Red-eyed Treefrogs?”

Grad **Gillian Larson** received a *Helen T. Gaige Award* for \$500 from the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists to support her research on: “Climatic adaptation of an invasive gecko: rapid adaptive evolution or developmental plasticity?”

Alum Success Story

Marisa Korody (B.S. Environmental Biology '02), who did research with Dr. **Dave Gray**, went on to earn both an M.S. and a Ph.D. from Indiana State University. Dr. Korody is now a conservation geneticist at San Diego Zoo’s Institute for Conservation Research.

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Department of Biology

California State University, Northridge

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