

Biological Sciences Newsletter

UIC COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES
 Department of Biological Sciences

Volume 3, Issue 2

Spring 2009

Inside this issue:

The Boss' Corner	1
Faculty Spotlight and GRE Summer Preparation Program	2
Alumni Spotlight and Advisors' Corner	3
Faculty News and BIOS 196	4
Scholarships and Summer Session	5
Make a Gift	6

The Boss' Corner

Greetings Everyone,

At the close of last year, the Department hosted a very successful holiday party in the Cardinal Room of the Student Center. In addition to spreading holiday cheer among the faculty, staff, and students and passing out 30 door prizes, we hailed Professor Christopher "Chris" Comer for his retirement after 25 years of service to UIC. We also wished him good luck on his next adventure, because as of January 2009, "Emeritus" Comer became the new Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Montana (in Missoula).



The new year has started off with some financial uncertainty, as many of you are no doubt are experiencing in your own jobs and households. In anticipation of a rescission of state support for UIC, the Department has cut costs in a number of areas. We will see what the final numbers are when they are released from Springfield, and plan accordingly for the remainder of this and next academic year.

Wishing you all the best during these challenging times,
 Brian Kay, PhD
 Professor & Head



Pictured above, left to right, Susan Liebman, Janet Richmond, and Constance Jeffrey



Pictured above, left to right, Linda Gazolla holding Niko Comer, Huzefa Photowald holding Zoya Photowald, Sam Crish, Chris Comer, and Nick Mathenia.



Faculty and staff congratulate Christopher Comer and celebrate the holidays.



Christopher Comer at his retirement celebration

University of Illinois at Chicago
 College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
 Department of Biological Sciences
 (MC 066)
 845 West Taylor Street
 Chicago, Illinois 60607

Faculty Spotlight: Professor Emily Minor



**Interested in the
Biology
Colloquium?
Want to know
more?**

**Check out the BCQ
website at:
[http://www.uic.edu/
depts.biol/bcql
index.htm](http://www.uic.edu/depts/biol/bcqlindex.htm)**

I grew up in a military family and spent most of my childhood moving around Europe – England, the Netherlands, and Spain. I finished my last year of high school in California and then moved to Florida, where I remained for the next eight years. My early college years were not typical of an academic. I started out waiting tables and attending community college part-time; after six years, I transferred to the University of South Florida and completed a B.S. in Biology. Since then, I have slowly been making my way north. I went to Duke University (North Carolina) for my PhD and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (Appalachian Lab) for a postdoc. Finally, in 2008, I ended up in the beautiful city of Chicago. I am thrilled to be in a big city with public transportation, wonderful parks, and an infinite number of restaurants, museums, and events.

I am an ecologist at heart, with an interest in all organism-environment interactions. My research has focused on these interactions at the landscape scale (landscape ecology), and particularly on how they are affected by urbanization and human disturbance. Many people don't know what a landscape is or what landscape ecology means. A landscape can be broadly defined, but one way to think about it is what you see when you look out of an airplane window. Landscape ecologists study spatial patterns across landscapes and the processes that cause them. Over the past few years, I have studied the effects of urbanization and habitat fragmentation on forest birds and plants. I have also studied landscape connectivity, or how landscape pattern influences movement of organisms over broad spatial scales. At UIC, I plan to focus my research efforts on understanding the spatial patterns and processes occurring here in the Chicago area. New projects underway include mapping ecosystem services in the city and examining rodent communities in the "cloverleaf" interchange areas near highways. I am also a member of the LEAP faculty and look forward to working with the diverse group of graduate students, faculty, and research partners in our multidisciplinary program.

**Need help with your
science class?**

Then visit the Science
Learning Center!

201 SES 845
West Taylor Street
Chicago, Illinois 60607

SLC offers tutoring
Monday- Friday
from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Summer GRE Preparation

Summer GRE Class

June 3 - July 29, 2009
Wednesdays from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Registration Deadline June 3, 2009

Requirements to be eligible for the program:

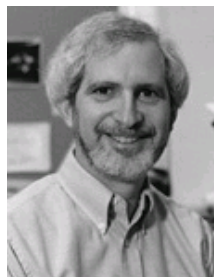
- **Current or future applicant to UIC School of Public Health**
- **Must take GRE within two weeks of completing the course**
- **Regularly attend classes**
- **Attendance at the recruitment conference which occurs during the session**
- **Complete evaluation upon completion of course**

For additional information:

Call (312) 355-2951
or e-mail Dorothy Washington-Calvin at dwash5@uic.edu

Alumni Spotlight: Barry Ganetzky, PhD

Although it is hard for me to believe, it has now been 40 years since my introduction to the world of research and academia. As a junior, I began an honor's research project under Michael Cummings, then a new, young Assistant Professor, studying oogenesis and early development in *Drosophila*. I loved doing research so much that although my project was supposed to last 10 weeks, I continued working with Cummings for the next two years. This experience shaped the rest of my life. It seemed almost too good to be true that one could make a career out of using imagination and creativity to discover answers to nature's secrets. I still feel pretty much the same way. In 1979 I joined the faculty at the University of Wisconsin, where I am now Professor of Genetics and Medical Genetics and the Steenbock Professor of Biological Sciences. In 2006, I was honored to be elected to the National Academy of Sciences.



Throughout my career I was fortunate to benefit from outstanding mentors. I pursued my PhD in genetics at the University of Washington with Larry Sandler, one of the great *Drosophila* geneticists. He helped elevate *Drosophila* genetics to a fine art and under his guidance I acquired these skills. I went on to postdoctoral work at CalTech with Seymour Benzer, who founded the entire field of *Drosophila* behavior genetics and neurogenetics. To dissect molecular mechanisms of neural signaling, I screened for temperature-sensitive paralytic mutants with the idea that such mutants were likely to be defective in some aspect of neural function. I continued working on these mutants ever since - they have proven to be a treasure trove of valuable material. Many of the affected genes turned out to encode ion channel proteins and our studies provided the first molecular insights into their structure and function. It is now known that many heritable neurological disorders in humans are also caused by mutations affecting ion channels. We were able to identify one such human gene that underlies an often fatal form of cardiac arrhythmia because of its close similarity to the *Drosophila* counterpart we had discovered.

More recently, we have been using our mutant collection to study synaptic development and neurodegeneration both of which also have important implications for human disease. It has been enormously gratifying that studies I pursued primarily because they were interesting and fun turned out to be of direct medical relevance as well. I remain grateful for the opportunities and education I received at UIC that started me on the right path to a successful and satisfying career. And all by playing with fruit flies for 40 years!

Advisors' Corner

- Please call early to schedule an appointment to talk about registering for Summer 2009 and Fall 2009 courses! We get booked quickly and if you wait until registration begins, you may not get an appointment right away.
- Please schedule an appointment for credit checks and course planning. Walk-ins are only for quick questions and if you would like to change your major.
- KN 251 and KN 252 taken here at UIC will satisfy five hours of credit towards the biological sciences major as well as one lab requirement. There is a waitlist for KN 251. Additional information and the waitlist is available at <http://www.uic.edu/las/students/prehealth/restrictedcourses.shtml>.
- Check the prerequisites before registering for a course. Being ABLE to register for a course does not necessarily mean you have taken the prerequisites.

Academic Advisors:

Tricia Stark

3276 SES

Vanessa Ricker

3266 SES

Call

(312) 996-2211

**to make an
appointment.**

Monday,

Wednesday,

Thursday, and

Friday from 9:30

a.m. to noon and

from 1 p.m. to 3:30

p.m.

Walk-ins available

Tuesday from 9:30

a.m. to noon and

from 1 p.m. to 3:30

p.m. Walk-ins are

available for quick

questions or to

change major.

Faculty News

Congratulations to the following recipients of a Interdisciplinary Research Award for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences!

This award encourages a collaborative effort among different departments, colleges, and even universities.

David Wise and Moria Zellner for the project, "Management of Woodland Biodiversity in Chicago land: Using Agent-Based Modeling to Understand the Dynamics of a Linked Social Ecological System."

David Featherstone, Thomas Park, Mike Ragozzino, and Scott Shippy for the project, "Regulation of Mammalian Brain Chemistry and Behavior by Cystine-Glutamate Transporters."

Miquel Gonzalez-Meler, Emily Minor, Neil Sturchio, and Moria Zellner for the project, "Nutrient Farming: A Market-Based Strategy that Links Air and Water Quality Improvement with Restoration of Natural Areas, Recreation, and Policy."

Graduate
Office:

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Students:
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bethann@uic.edu

SCHOLARSHIPS!!!

The Office of Special Scholarship Programs (OSSP) assists undergraduate and professional students in applying for nationally-competitive and UIC scholarships.

For more information on upcoming scholarships, visit them in 2506 University Hall, or at their website:
<http://www.uic.edu/depts/oa/ssp>.

Faculty Research

Professor Paul Malchow has begun a collaboration with Professor Matthew Kreitzer at Indiana Wesleyan University to use videoconferencing tools to interact with students in Dr. Kreitzer's class on Independent Research. Professor Malchow meets via video with the students once a week to help provide an interactive experience for the students that combines the strengths of a "world-class Research I University" with the benefits of study at a small undergraduate liberal arts institution. The program involves participation in undergraduate-led journal article presentations, conversations about potential career paths in neuroscience and Biology, discussions about research opportunities for undergraduates at UIC and at other institutions, and descriptions of advanced study in the Biological Sciences at the graduate level. To this point in the semester the experience has been well received by undergraduates at IWU who seem to be excited about the opportunity to interact with researchers at a major research institution.

Contributed by Professor Paul Malchow

BIOS 196

The Biology Colloquium (BCQ) is up to another successful semester. With enrollment at the highest it has ever been, the course coordinators have worked hard to invite guest speakers from diverse backgrounds to address all the students' interest. Some of the guest speakers this semester are BCQ alumni who were students as far back as ten years ago to as recent as three years ago. Other speakers include some BCQ favorites, such as Professor Brown and Professor Schmidt from UIC, Dr. Colip from Illinois College of Optometry, and Rachel Santymire, PhD, from the Lincoln Park Zoo.

BCQ has also been busy planning for field trips throughout the semester. We've been invited to join Professor Brown's Ecology Lab course on their Saturday field trips to neighboring state parks to study ecological systems. More trips will be planned as soon as spring approaches. Our field trip coordinators are working hard planning our annual end-of-the-year trip. This year we will be traveling to Lake Itasca the week after finals. Anyone is welcome to join! Check out BCQ's bulletin board located outside Tricia Stark's office in SES to keep up with what BCQ is doing.

Scholarships!

How do I find money for my studies?

The Office of Special Scholarship Programs is available to help you search and apply for scholarships. Take a look at the awards listed below and at others listed on our website. Contact us if you have questions or need help applying.

J.W. Saxe Prize: Twelve \$2000 awards in support of public service projects or no-pay/low-pay internships in public service for undergraduate or graduate students.
<http://www.jwaxefund.org/> Deadline: March 15

McKelvie Scholarship: Several \$1000-\$2000 awards for undergraduate and graduate students interested in careers in government.
http://polisci.unl.edu/undergrad/undergrad_scholarships.html Deadline: April 1

Benjamin Gilman Scholarship for Study Abroad: Up to \$5000 for Pell Grant recipients to use towards their study abroad experience during Fall 2009 or Academic Year 2009-2010.
<http://www.iie.org/gilman> Deadline: April 7

Congressional Hispanic Caucus: \$2500 award for undergraduates and \$5000 for graduate students who show excellent leadership potential.
<http://www.chci.org/chciyouth/> Deadline: April 15

Medical Student Scholarship Program: Tuition, fees, and stipend for medical study provided to students willing to train in primary care and serve in physician-shortage areas of Illinois.
http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/rural_scholarship.htm Deadline: May 15

National Medical Fellowships: Need and merit based scholarships for minority medical students.
<http://www.nmfonline.org/programs.html> Deadline: June ?

Planning for fall:

Many post-graduate scholarships require extensive planning. Students benefit from exploring these awards and beginning to plan in spring 2009 for applications the following fall. The office of Special Scholarship Programs will be hosting several events designed to prepare juniors for these awards in April. Watch your e-mails and our website for dates. Make an appointment to discuss these and other awards with Beth Powers by calling (312) 355-2477.

LAS SEEKS STUDENTS SEEKING SCHOLARSHIPS!!

- Awards range from \$600-\$10,000
- For scholarship listings, application and guidelines, visit <http://www.uic.edu/las/students/scholarships/>
- All applications and supporting materials must be submitted by 4 p.m. Tuesday, March 31, 2009.

Summer Session 2009

4 Week Session: May 18-June 12
8 Week Session: June 15-August 7

New Pilot Program!!

Complete two semesters in just 12 weeks of the following subject areas:

Math 180 / Math 181	English 240 / English 243
(Calculus I / Calculus II)	(Introduction to Literary Study and Critical Methods / American Literature: Beginnings to 1900)

Not sure what you want to do when you graduate?

Visit the Office of Career Services.
 1200 West Harrison Street
 Room 3050 Student Services Building (SSB)
 Chicago, Illinois 60607

Call (312) 996-2300 to schedule an appointment or consult the Office of Career Services website for drop-in advising times.

Research Library open Monday-Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Important Dates to Remember!

March 23-27:
 Spring Vacation. No classes.

May 1:
 Instruction ends.

May 4-8:
 Final examinations.

May 9:
 Semester ends.

Make a Gift to Biology

We are committed to developing support for our Biology students. We have a number of scholarships to fund students and their research. We are focused on increasing the scholarship opportunities provided to them, and enhancing the classroom experience by acquiring up to date technology for our laboratories. Making a gift is easy and tax-deductible, and it has an immediate impact on the experience of Biology students.

To make a gift, simply write a check payable to:

The University of Illinois at Chicago

In the Memo section write Unrestricted Biology

University of Illinois at Chicago
 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
 Department of Biological Sciences (MC 066)
 845 West Taylor Street,
 Chicago, Illinois 60607-7060

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 Kaitlyn Resetar
 Tricia Stark
 Vanessa Ricker

<http://www.uic.edu/depts/bios/ungradstudy.shtml>

Keep in Touch!

Alumni Questionnaire

Please send me more information on:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing to an article in the newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Upcoming Seminars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Department needs for private support | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Opportunities |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other please specify: |

Name

Address

E-mail address

Phone

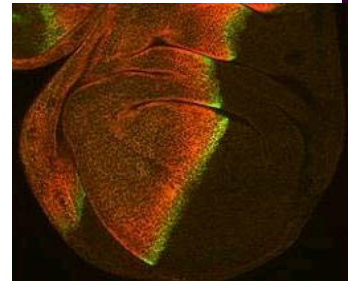


Image of a drosophila wing imaginal disk generated by BioS 321 students, Joy Skwarandu, Kevin Go, and Tri Trinh.

CUT OUT, COMPLETE AND MAIL FORM TO:

VANESSA RICKER
 DEPARTMENT OF
 BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES (MC 066)
 845 WEST TAYLOR STREET
 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60607-7060
 -OR-

E-MAIL US THE INFORMATION AT RICKERVK@UIC.EDU