

# PHI SIGMA NEWS



The Official Phi Sigma Newsletter

Fall 2018

## The Weigel Seminar Series

By: Rachel Sparks

The 2018-2019 Phi Sigma executive board is excited to announce a new seminar coming to our Departmental Seminar Series, the Weigel Seminar! This seminar series will emphasize graduate student professional development through interacting with a prominent researcher in the biological sciences. The Weigel Seminar is distinct from our other weekly seminars in that in addition to hosting an outstanding researcher, this seminar will give graduate students who are members of Phi Sigma priority in scheduling meetings with the speaker in order to foster the growth of our graduate students as researchers and educators. The first annual Weigel Seminar will take place during our regularly scheduled seminar time on **Thursday, November 1**. Our seminar speaker will be available to meet with students throughout the day on Thursday, and we will be organizing a dinner after Luncker's on Thursday as well—keep an eye out for an email about scheduling!

## This Year's Weigel Seminar Speaker: George Uetz

By: Rachel Sparks

Our first annual speaker for the Weigel Seminar will be Dr. George Uetz from the University of Cincinnati! Dr. Uetz studies multi-modal communication and sexual selection in wolf spiders as well as social behavior in colonial web-building

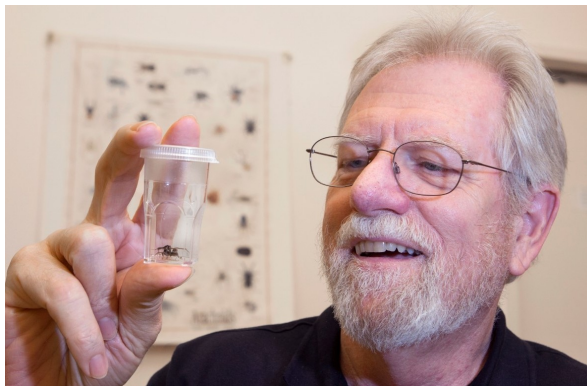


Image by Joseph Fuqua II/UC Creative Services from UC Magazine

spiders. This past summer, Dr. Uetz and some of the students in his lab presented some of their research on topics including the color vision of wolf spiders related to mating displays, how male spiders use vibration to attract females, the persistence of shy and bold behavior in juvenile spiders, and the effect of bacterial infection on spiders' mating behavior. His seminar on November 1<sup>st</sup> will be entitled *Multimodal communication in wolf spiders: content, context and consequences*.

### IMPORTANT DATES

#### FALL 2018

##### August 23

Phi Sigma Membership Application Opens

##### September 10

Membership Application Closes

##### September 22

Fall Picnic

##### October 27

Spooky Trivia

##### November 1

Weigel Seminar

##### December 8

Winter Potluck

#### SPRING 2019

##### January 21

Weigel and Mockford-Thompson Submission Opens

##### February 25

Weigel and Mockford-Thompson Submission Deadline

##### April 5

University Research Symposium

##### April 12

Phi Sigma Research Symposium

##### April 27

Spring Banquet

2018 Grant Award  
Recipients

Mockford-Thompson

Austin Calhoun

Kerrigan Tobin

Rosario Marroquin-  
Flores

Weigel

Anna Abusharekh

Chance Bainbridge

Abigail Benson

Tony Breitenbach

Austin Calhoun

Maggie DeMaegd

Rachael DiSciullo

Kristin Duffield

Malileh Esfahanian

Kate Evans

Christy Fornero

Casey Gahrs

Kylie Hampton

Kiley Hughes

Rosario Marroquin-  
Flores

Kristina McIntire

Logan Sauers

Anna Scheidel

Taylor Suo

Kerrigan Tobin

Ashley Waring

Phi Sigma thanks **Dr. Rebekka Darner** for serving as the Chair on the review committee, and congratulates **Dr. Nate Mortimer** on receiving the first ever Outstanding Mockford-Thompson Reviewer Award. We would also like to thank **Drs. Anderson, Borowicz, Bowden, Byers, Casto, Cook, Hammond, A. Mortimer, N. Mortimer, Nichols, Paitz, Stein, and Vidal-Gadea** for reviewing Mockford-Thompson applications. We additionally thank everyone who helped review Weigel applications.

# Phi Sigma Beta Lambda Chapter ReggieNet Page

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By: **Ashley Waring**

In the Fall of 2017, Phi Sigma created a ReggieNet page with the intent of using it as a resource and communication hub for all things Phi Sigma. This year, the board has decided to use the ReggieNet page for Phi Sigma related resources as well as to provide easier access to departmental information. On the left-hand side of the page you will see tabs for Phi Sigma Resources, Department Resources, Grant Submissions, and Forms. The Phi Sigma Resources tab will lead you to a page that has links to all things related to Phi Sigma, including but not limited to: membership info, former symposium programs, past Boobologists, and agendas for the Executive Board meetings. On the Department Resources tab, you will find information such as a checklist of graduation requirements for both Masters and Doctoral students, links to campus resources, seminar schedules, and contact information for faculty and graduate students, among many other things. The page is still a work in progress, so any suggestions would be welcomed!

If you have any feedback or suggestions for the page, please follow this link (<https://goo.gl/forms/Q6JRRYWlhoJwpcmJ3>) and let us know what you think!

## TA Training and Social Events

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By: **Kylie Hampton**

For the past few years, biological graduate students that have been granted with teaching assistantships participate in a couple days of training to prepare for a productive semester. This year, Phi Sigma continued on with the TA Training Week tradition of getting all, new and current, biological graduate students together to celebrate the end of training and the start of a new academic year. Celebration consisted of a series of social events organized by the Phi Sigma social chair, Rosario Marroquin-Flores. This year's social events included:

Wednesday- Phi Sigma hosted a dinner party at Firehouse Pizza in Uptown Normal where graduate students were able to enjoy pizza of all kinds. As this was the first social event, new students were able to meet each other as well as the existing members of Phi Sigma!

Thursday- Grad students joined Phi Sigma at Pheasant Lanes to play mini golf! Those who enjoyed themselves decided to stick around and sing karaoke for a fun end to the night.

Friday- Students were invited to attend Normal's Bruegala, the local charity beer and wine festival, held at the Cornbelters stadium. The evening consisted of beer and wine samples from breweries near and far, local food trucks, and live music to celebrate the end of another successful TA Training Week and social events hosted by Phi Sigma!

## A Warm Welcome To Our New Biological Sciences Graduate Students!

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**Josselyn Gonzalez**  
Stein

**Laurel Howdysshell**  
Perry

**Mary McKay**  
Garris/Vidal-Gadea

**Brad Smith**  
Garris

**Eva Gunawan**  
N. Mortimer

**Iresha Jayasinghe**  
Darner

**Kevin McNally**  
A. Mortimer

**Jesse Smith**  
Byers

**Jasmine Hatcher-  
Moorman**  
Gatto

**Mason Jett**  
A. Mortimer

**Ian Rines**  
Sadd/Sakaluk

**Monica Tamrazi**  
Vidal-Gadea

**Richard Helmuth**  
GSAL

**Julia Martin**  
A. Mortimer

**Madi Rittinger**  
Sakaluk/Thompson

**Visalakshi Veerappan**  
Stein

# Meet the 2018-2019 Phi Sigma Executive Board



## President: Rachel Sparks

Hi all! To briefly sum up my activities in the department outside of Phi Sigma, I am a member of the RESIST lab, where we study methods of increasing scientific literacy in the general public, and I am also a lecture instructor for BSC 101. When I'm being a real person outside of Felmley Hall, I enjoy passionately watching and critiquing all shows in The Bachelor franchise, petting my three cats, and taking naps approximately three times per week. I also have a fairly impressive collection of photos and autographs from the numerous Star Trek conventions I've attended. I'm looking forward to implementing several new initiatives in Phi Sigma this year, including our new external grant program and the Weigel Seminar – stay tuned for updates on these programs!



## Vice President: Ashley Waring

I am a member of Nate Mortimer's Fly Lab, where we study host-parasite interactions with a focus on host immunity in *Drosophila melanogaster*. Outside of work, I enjoy riding my dirtbike, doing spray paint art and ceramics, collecting globes, and undertaking home improvement projects (side note: I'm currently trying to fix the patchy grass in my backyard, so any tips would be appreciated). In terms of Phi Sigma, as Vice President it is my mission to plan and execute a symposium that is as good as, if not better than, the one our previous Vice President (now President) Rachel Sparks organized.



## Social Chair: Rosario Marroquin-Flores

I am a PhD student co-advised in the Bowden Lab and the Paitz Lab, investigating how temperature impacts the molecular expression of sex-determining genes in the red-eared slider turtle (*Trachemys scripta elegans*). I have a grumpy old-man cat, Damien, and a mostly well-behaved pup named Simone whom seemed to have enjoyed moving to IL. In my free time, I enjoy backpacking, playing soccer, cooking, and exploring anything that is unfamiliar to me. As the social chair, my goal is to promote collaboration and resiliency in our department. I want our department to feel like a community and to create opportunities for our students to participate in outreach and community/economic development. If you ever need anything, come to me! I'll do my best to help.



## Treasurer: Kate Evans

I work with the deadliest creatures in the world in the Juliano lab, while doing research on mosquitoes. I spend my non-research time failing to learn how to surf and reading. My favorite authors are Terry Pratchett, Derrick Jensen, Edward Abbey, and Robin McKinley. I look forward to reading Principles of Accounting every morning and putting lots of dragons in it. I've recently taken up bread baking, and I do a fair amount of poorly executed yoga. All interested parties will be directed elsewhere.



## Business & Bookstore Manager: Julia Martin

I am a first year Master's student working in Alysia Mortimer's Fly Lab. The broad goal in my research is to extend health-span in humans, so I currently work with model organism *Drosophila melanogaster* to study genes associated with aging and age related diseases. This is my second year as a member of Phi Sigma, and I am very excited to take on the role of Business Manager (even though the social events and beer are my favorite part of it). I live strictly by the "work hard play hard" motto, so outside of SLB you can catch me doing whatever adventure comes my way (and probably documenting it on Snapchat).



## Secretary: Kylie Hampton

I am a second year Master's student, co-advised by Drs. Ben Scott and Scott Sakaluk. I am broadly interested in ecological immunology and mating behavior. My Master's thesis investigates the effects of mating status and genotype on female immunity in decorated crickets. While I'm not watching crickets mate, I'm most likely participating in one of my many intriguing hobbies, which includes: partially reading novels of all genres for my book club, failing at making recipes found on Pinterest, culturing my pallet with cheap wine and PBR, and binge-watching Netflix so often that it's basically a full time job. As secretary, I plan to use my sarcasm and goofy sense of humor to create this year's edition of the Phi Sigma satirical journal, the Boobologist– so stay tuned!



# Super Social Squad, Social Chair Committee— calling for members!

By: Rosario Marroquin-Flores

This spring, Phi Sigma would like to host 5K Fun Run as a fundraiser to a local organization in Bloomington-Normal. Something like this takes some organizational skills! I would like to ask for some help from my graduate and undergraduate members. We will need T-shirt designs, volunteer recruitment, permits, a contact person for registered participants, and a route for us to run/walk. I am toying with the idea of prizes for our winners as well as rewards for our volunteers. I would love to have some collaborators to help me with this! Additionally, I would like to organize regular outreach opportunities throughout the year for our members to participate in. A record of outreach is important for students who are interested in beefing up their CVs for fellowship applications and for medical school, and are a great way to have a broader impact in the local community.

Please contact me at [ramarro@ilstu.edu](mailto:ramarro@ilstu.edu) if you are interested in participating in upcoming events or are interested in becoming a member of the Super Social Squad.

## Upcoming Outreach Opportunities

**Millennium Girls Conference on Saturday, October 6** — I would like to invite our female members to participate in this event from 7:00am-3:30pm at State Farm Corporate South in Bloomington. Millennium Girls is a one-day event for 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls to explore their potential in technology and science. It includes a full day of technology, science, and math in hands-on labs and activities. Go to <http://millenniumgirls.illinoisstate.edu/> to learn about the program. If interested, email Tracy Oakley at [toakley@ilstu.edu](mailto:toakley@ilstu.edu) before September 14th with your name, year, major, T-shirt size, desired role, and whether or not you available to drive for the event.

**Letter to a Pre-Scientist: Bloomington Edition** — Phi Sigma will be organizing bi-weekly correspondence with local students in a high school science class. This is a pen-pal system aimed at teaching young students what a scientist is and getting them in touch with potential opportunities in STEM fields.

## A Letter From Our Advisors

By: Nate Mortimer

Ryan and I are excited to be serving as Phi Sigma advisors for the upcoming school year. Our goal is to provide assistance to the Phi Sigma board so that they can continue to support student research and scholarship along with philanthropic and social events. We are particularly pleased by the announcements of several new programs, including the Weigel Seminar Series and an external grant competition. These events will give our students exciting new opportunities for professional development and service. By promoting organization, communication, and shared responsibility, Ryan and I hope to make this an enjoyable experience for the board members that results in a number of high quality events that serve the society as a whole.



I am an assistant professor of cellular immunology at ISU. I got my Ph.D. from Emory University in 2009, and prior to moving to ISU, I held a faculty position at the University of Warwick. Research in my lab is focused on understanding host-parasite interactions and the genetic basis of autoimmunity. I am delighted to continue advising Phi Sigma, and Rachel Sparks definitely did not write this last sentence.

Nate Mortimer



I am a second year faculty member here at ISU but I am by no means new to ISU. I started in the Ph.D. program in 2004 and was the vice president of Phi Sigma during that time. After receiving my Ph.D. in 2010, I held post doc positions at ISU and the University of Illinois. My research focuses on how vertebrate embryos regulate their exposure to maternal steroids during development.

Ryan Paitz

## Contact Us

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The 2018-2019 Phi Sigma executive board (L-R): Rosario, Kylie, Ashley holding Popsicle, Kate, Rachel, & Julia