

PHI SIGMA NEWS

The Official Phi Sigma Newsletter

By Mackenzie Seymour



Phi Sigma's 25th Annual Research Symposium

By Sharanya Paul

We are thrilled to announce Dr. Stephen Brohawn as the keynote speaker for the 25th Annual Research Symposium. Dr. Brohawn is an Associate Professor in the Molecular & Cell Biology and Neuroscience departments at UC Berkeley. The Brohawn Lab studies force sensation in biology, investigating how mechanical forces are transduced into cellular signals underlying touch, hearing, proprioception, pain sensation, blood pressure regulation, and cell growth. The lab employs X-ray crystallography, cryo-EM, electrophysiology, biochemical, and biophysical techniques to elucidate how mechanical forces couple to channel gating at the molecular level. A major challenge in this field is the lack of specific pharmacological, immunological, and imaging tools to investigate force sensors at tissue, cellular, and subcellular levels, as well as their physiological and clinical implications. To address this, the Brohawn Lab is developing novel tools and approaches to enhance the understanding of force sensation, sensory transduction, and electrical signaling. We look forward to hosting Dr. Brohawn and gaining insights from his work!



The research symposium locations are the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts for posters and the State Farm Hall of Business for oral talks.

Important Dates

January 23rd: Membership applications open

January 27th: Weigel, Mockford-Thompson, and travel grant applications open

February 14th: Membership applications close

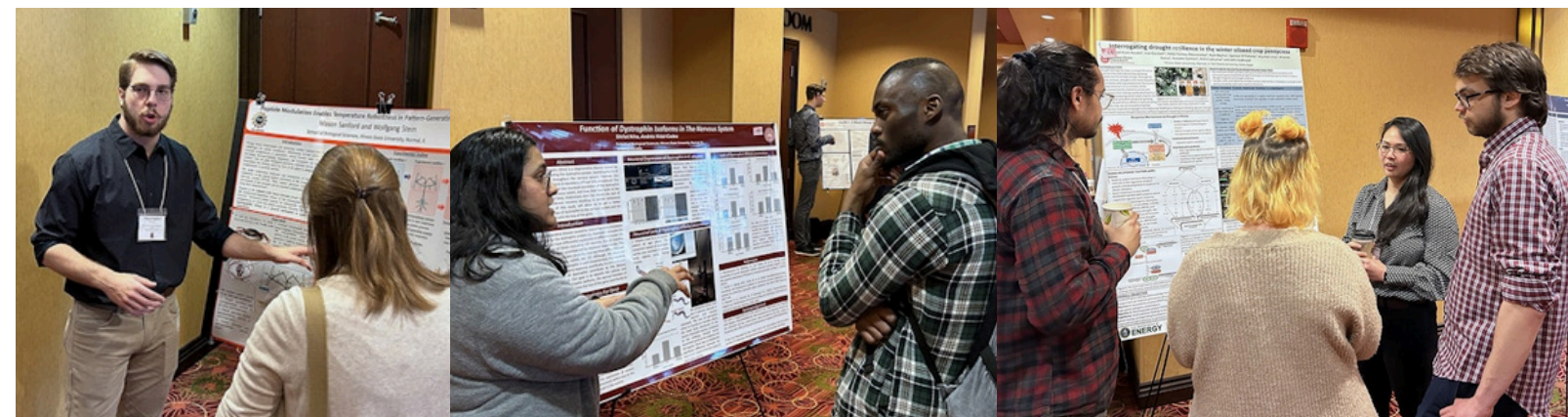
February 28th: Weigel, Mockford-Thompson, and travel grant applications close

March 7th: Phi Sigma Symposium abstracts due

April 4th: Phi Sigma Symposium

April 7th-14th: Phi Sigma Board nominations/election

May 2nd: Spring Banquet



Halloween Paint Night

By Mackenzie Seymour

Our Halloween Paint Night was a smashing success! Thank you to everyone who joined us for a night of creativity and fun. The relaxed atmosphere allowed everyone to unwind and focus on their creativity, while snacks and drinks added a festive touch to the evening. We had a fantastic time and are already looking forward to next year's event!



Winter Potluck

By Mackenzie Seymour

Our Winter Potluck was a cozy and festive gathering to remember! Thank you to everyone who brought their favorite dishes to share.

Teams got creative with candy, frosting, and imagination in our gingerbread house competition. The competition was a fun highlight of the evening, with participants getting creative and crafting some impressive (and delicious) houses. Thank you again to everyone who joined us — we can't wait to do it all again next year!



Congratulations to Ravi, Sydney, Maddie K., Tanisha, and Maddie W. for winning the competition and receiving free tickets to the Spring Banquet!



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Welcome New Bio-GradBirds!

MS
Josh Graunke (Clem)

PhD
Abraham Anane (Dahl)

Membership Applications

By Olivia Draper

Membership applications open January 23rd and close February 14th.

Phi Sigma is the Honors Biology Association here at Illinois State University! Joining Phi Sigma gives you the opportunity to attend stress free events during a busy semester, show off your School of Biology swag, and practice critical presentation skills. This semester, Phi Sigma is hosting an annual research symposium for students to present exciting research currently happening here at the university, as well as give our members a chance to compete for travel grant funding. Membership also includes a free t-shirt, and the opportunity to attend our Spring Banquet later in May. To join, there are a few criteria:

Undergraduates: Must be junior or senior standing with a 3.0 GPA, majoring in Biology, Molecular & Cellular Biology, Biochemistry, Biology Education, or any Laboratory Science, who have been taking courses for at least one semester.

Graduates: Must have completed at least one semester, with a minimum GPA of 3.0.

The application has a \$50 fee, which includes one free T-shirt, and a spot at our symposium! On behalf of Phi Sigma, best of luck in the coming semester, and we cannot wait to meet all of our new members!

Exploring the Latest in Biology: SICB 2025

By Mackenzie Seymour

A large group represented ISU's biology department at the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology conference in Atlanta, GA earlier this year. It was an incredible experience! The event brought together experts and enthusiasts from across a variety of fields, providing valuable opportunities for networking, learning, and sharing research.



Not pictured: Dr. Fernanda Duque & Dr. Ryan Paitz

Interested in attending a conference between March 1st and August 30th this year? Apply to the Phi Sigma National Travel Grant by February 28th to support your attendance!