

PHI SIGMA NEWS



The Official Phi Sigma Newsletter

Spring 2023

Symposium Keynote Speaker: Dr. Seth Bordenstein

By: Caitlyn Kant

This year's Symposium Keynote Speaker is Dr. Seth Bordenstein from Penn State University. Dr. Bordenstein's areas of interest include Endosymbiosis, Microbiomes, Evolution, and Phage Biology. Dr. Bordenstein's laboratory group, "endeavors to understand the evolutionary and genetic principles that shape symbiotic interactions between animals, microbes, and viruses and the major applications of these interactions to human health". The title of his keynote address is "Rules of Symbiotic Life".



Keynote Address: "Rules of Symbiotic Life"

By: Dr. Seth Bordenstein

"Species interactions are fundamental to complex life. No large macroorganism is an autonomous entity capable of living a germ-free lifestyle. As such, biologists and philosophers are now seeking new paradigms, terms, and rules for life in a complex, symbiotic world. Key questions driving this imperative include what are the rules of intimate symbiotic interactions, what are the patterns of microbiome variation between host species and during host speciation, and what are the principles of microbiome variation within a single host species including humans? In this talk, I will distill two decades of experience to offer answers to these questions using a global symbiont in arthropods, studies of microbiome variation between host species and in their hybrids, and translational investigations of the patterns and causes of microbiome variation across the diversity of Americans. Results contribute to a wider dialogue that we are in the early phase of a new century of biology focused on unsiloing the macroscopic and microscopic borders of life."

IMPORTANT DATES

SPRING 2023

February 6th

Grant Writing Workshop

February 24th

Phi Sigma Research Symposium
Registration Deadline

February 28th

Weigel & Mockford-Thompson
Grant Submissions Deadline

March 24th

Phi Sigma Research Symposium
Featuring:

- Poster Sessions
- Oral Presentations
- Travel Grant Competition
- Keynote Speaker: Dr. Seth Bordenstein

April 2023, TBD

Phi Sigma Executive Board
Nominations/Applications Due

May 5th

Phi Sigma Spring Banquet

**Congratulations
to our Fall 2022
Phi Sigma
inductees!**

Mitch Agustin

Olivia Cohen

Erin Estes

Asher Gardner

Megan Grant

Boden Haluorsen

Cailyn Haubein

Ebenezer Korkor

Sophie Krivograd

Tyler Simpkins

Allison Walters

Clinton Warren

**Welcome to
Phi Sigma!**

Grant Writing Workshop

By: Caitlyn Kant

Grant writing can sometimes be scary, and often-times you may find yourself getting stuck. Have you ever wondered what exactly grant reviewers are looking for? Join us for advice and tips on research grant writing on February 6th from 10:30-11:30am in Julian Hall 226. This professional development workshop hosted by Phi Sigma will be led by Dr. Martin Engelke. While it is open for everyone, we strongly recommend future Mockford-Thompson/Weigel applicants participate in this event.



School of Biological Sciences
Illinois State University.

2022-2023 Design by Caitlyn Kant

Biological Sciences embroidered quarter zips; exclusive to our department and not found anywhere else on campus! Ordering will begin again in February, so keep your eyes peeled for information about how to place an order!

Biological Sciences Apparel

By: Caitlyn Kant

This year, Phi Sigma has begun offering new, School of Biological Sciences apparel. This apparel comes in all apparel types, colors, and sizes. We even had School of

Membership T-Shirt Contest

By: Caitlyn Kant

One of the benefits of joining Phi Sigma is getting an awesome t-shirt to show off your membership. But who designs these pieces of art? For the past few semesters, Phi Sigma has held a t-shirt design contest for membership shirts. This is an opportunity for members to put their creative minds to work. This is an opportunity for you to have your artwork displayed on the member shirts!



Fall 2022 Design Winner, by Caitlyn Kant

Travel Grants

By: Sadia Sultana

Two members of our chapter won Phi Sigma National Travel Grants in Fall 2022! With this support, Emily Harders shared her work at the Society of Integrative and Comparative Biology in Austin, Texas, and Liza Gautam presented her research at Plant and Animal Genome Conference in San Diego, California. Congratulations to Emily and Liza!

Phi Sigma Fall 2022 Events

By Caitlyn Kant

Fall Picnic

This year's annual 2022 Fall Picnic was held at Dr. Craig Gatto's house. Phi Sigma provided the main course, while attendees were encouraged to bring a side dish. Phi Sigma provided a variety of fun games for all to play. Thank you to everyone who helped to setup and cleanup this event, and thank you again to Dr. Gatto for hosting this event.



Spooky Trivia

This year, Phi Sigma hosted a spooky themed trivia night! All members were welcome to register teams for this event. Phi Sigma provided a variety of snacks for attendees. A special shout out to Tony Breitenbach, former Phi Sigma President, for helping to make this event happen. Also, congratulations to the winning team, Erin Estes, Carol Kiam Assato, Olivia Brooks, Emily Harders, Rebecca Chicosky, Kyle Funk, & Rachael DiSciullo!



Winter Gear Donation

This year, Phi Sigma organized a Winter Gear donation for students that are in need of winter clothing. The idea for this event, its organization, and execution, were put together by Ritika Shah, Phi Sigma Vice-President. Thank you to all of our clothing donors, volunteers for this event, and to Ritika for making this event happen.



Winter Potluck

Phi Sigma hosted its annual winter potluck at the Ironwood Golf Course. Phi Sigma provided the main dish,

rosemary chicken and stuffed portobello mushrooms, while attendees were encouraged to bring a side dish. At this event, there was a gingerbread decorating contest, where teams got together to try to make their gingerbread house look the best! Thank you again to everyone who provided side dishes and helped to setup/cleanup this event. And lastly, shout out to our winners, Sumaiya, Anindita Saha, and Arjuman Lima (Pictured to Left) for having the best gingerbread house!



Message from the President

By: **Sadia Sultana**

Fellow Phi Sigmoids, this newsletter is a summary of activities Phi Sigma had organized over the Fall-2022 and planning to host in Spring-2023. Phi Sigma executive board 2022-23 are delighted to your vivid participation in our events and looking forward to the continuous support in our future programs. Please save the date now and don't miss all the exciting scientific and social events.

Why Join Phi Sigma?

By: **Rebecca Chicosky**

Phi Sigma Biological Honor Society provides so many opportunities for our students, whether academic, social, or professional (plus a free shirt when you join)!

Our internal grants allow our students to not only get money for their research, but also experience with writing grants! We offer the Weigel grant, which is up to \$1,000 that goes towards research materials and the Mockford Thompson for a summer fellowship! Both are fantastic ways that we support our students in their research endeavors! Additionally, Phi Sigma offers several social opportunities, so you are able to get to know other people in the Biology department! Our fantastic Social Chair, Emily, puts together events like Spooky Trivia, a Fall Picnic, and even a Spring Banquet that brings everyone together! Additionally, we have started the new Mentorship Program so those who are struggling with graduate school can find support with other students that can guide them through this process. Lastly, Phi Sigma offers several professional development opportunities. Our biggest is the Professional Development Seminar Series where we bring knowledgeable individuals to you! For example, the wonderful Dr. Lise Comte and Dr. Laura Vogel gave the real deal on what it is like being a parent in academia. We are always taking suggestions, so whatever you would like to know, we can make it a reality. Overall, we are always striving to support our students in all aspects of academia!

Phi Sigma Executive Board Applications

By: **Caitlyn Kant**

Serving on the Phi Sigma board is an opportunity to serve the department, and is a very rewarding experience. We are accepting nominations through April; the official deadline will be announced soon. You may nominate yourself or someone else that you think would be a good fit, and you may nominate for one or multiple positions. Board members for 2023-2024 will be recognized at our Spring Banquet on May 5th. For more information about the responsibilities and time commitment of each position, please feel free to reach out to anyone on the current board.



Current Phi Sigma Executive Board being formally initiated at the 2022 Spring Banquet. From left to right: Rebecca Chicosky, Emily Harders, Christen Fairow, Caitlyn Kant, Gracious Donkor, Ritika Shah, and Sadia Sultana.

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