

PHI SIGMA NEWS



The Official Phi Sigma Newsletter

Spring 2019

Phi Sigma's 20th Annual Research Symposium

By: Ashley Waring

Based on the success of last year's symposium venue change, this year's symposium will be held at the Bloomington-Normal Marriott Hotel & Conference Center in uptown Normal on Friday, April 12th. The symposium will begin at 8AM and will include a continental breakfast, lunch, poster presentations, oral presentations, and our keynote speaker. Registration for both oral and poster presentations will be available on the Phi Sigma ReggieNet site starting January 25th and will be due by March 1st. Please contact Ashley Waring (alwarin@ilstu.edu) with any questions!

Keynote Speaker: S. Hollis Woodard, PhD

We are excited to announce that our keynote speaker for the 20th annual research symposium will be Dr. S. Hollis Woodard from the University of California, Riverside. Dr. Woodard's research focus is on the behavior and physiology of native bees in rapidly changing and extreme environments. Her lab utilizes bees to understand the mechanisms that underlie adaption, sensitivity, and resilience. Check out her website to see what being a part of her lab is all about at www.woodardlab.com.



Dr. Woodard's CV is posted on the Phi Sigma ReggieNet page. We are greatly looking forward

to hosting and learning from Dr. Woodard – be on the lookout for an email from Ashley Waring to schedule times to meet with her!

Travel Grant Awardees

By: Ashley Waring

Three members of our chapter won Phi Sigma National Travel Grants! With this support, Tony Breitenbach attended the Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology in Tampa, Florida to present his research on the effects of heat waves on sex ratios and gene expression in *Trachemys scripta*, Rachel Sparks traveled to Savannah, Georgia to present her research on implementing the Teaching for Transformative Experiences in Science model in introductory biology for pre-service teachers, and Taylor Suo presented on reducing seed coat fiber content to improve seed nutritional value of pennycress at Proventa International in Boston, MA. Congratulations to Tony, Rachel, and Taylor!

IMPORTANT DATES

SPRING 2019

January 21

Weigel and Mockford-Thompson Applications Open

Membership Application Opens

January 25

Symposium Registration opens

February 1

Membership Application Deadline

February 25

Travel Grant Deadline

Weigel and Mockford-Thompson Submission Deadline

March 1

Symposium Registration Deadline

Spring Trivia

April 5

University Research Symposium

April 12

Phi Sigma Research Symposium

April 22

Phi Sigma 2019-2020 Board Elections

April 27

Spring Banquet

Phi Sigma's Fall Picnic

By: Kylie Hampton



Every fall semester, Phi Sigma hosts a Fall Picnic for all members of Phi Sigma to celebrate the start of another academic year with great food and even greater company. This year, Phi Sigma provided libations, as well as burgers, veggie burgers, and brats for the main course! All attendees were encouraged to bring a guest and a side dish to share.



The 2018 Phi Sigma Fall Picnic was a big success! A little more than 50 guests RSVP'd and made the event special by creating a delectable spread that included many delicious dishes ranging from homemade pasta salad and spicy chickpeas to fresh banana bread and warm cookies! A great big thank you to Charlie and Karen Thompson for hosting the event at their home and to everyone that attended and made this year's picnic one to remember!

Inaugural External Grant Award

By: Rachel Sparks

Inspired by our outreach with Bent Elementary last year, the 2018-2019 executive board began a new External Grant program this semester to formally award a grant of up to \$1,000 to a teacher, school, or community organization promoting K-12 students' interest and engagement in biology. A number of applications were received, and after a double-blind review process, our reviewers unanimously selected the STEM Club at Normal West High School as the recipient of this grant. Funds were used to purchase a Do-It-Yourself, open source Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) thermocycler kit produced by OpenPCR. The Bio-Rad PCR Bioinformatics kit allowed STEM Club students experience constructing the kit, testing and calibrating the PCR thermocycler, and developing a protocol for future use by students. Thank you to Maggie DeMaegd, Kristin Duffield, Kate Evans, Kylie Hampton, Kara Hodges, and Amanda Klingler, who volunteered their time to review all of the applications!

Halloween Trivia Night!

By: Rachel Sparks

To fund our first annual External Grant, Phi Sigma held a Halloween-themed trivia night on October 27 at Ironwood Golf Course. Attendees enjoyed catering by Moe's Southwest Grill while answering questions about spooky topics like horror movies, serial killers, and ghosts along with our favorite classic categories of pop culture, trivia snake, and Harry Potter. We learned that nobody knew that ISU alum Colton Underwood is the current Bachelor, that costume designers for Harry Potter started sewing the pockets of the robes shut because Tom Felton (who played Draco Malfoy) kept sneaking candy on set in their pockets, and that there are multiple terms to describe the body shape of worm-like insect larvae. There were a number of excellent entries in the costume contest, including but not limited to notorious candy aficionado Draco Malfoy, *Aedes* (pronounced 80s) *aegypti*, Austin Powers, and a GFP-tagged *Drosophila melanogaster*. Bernie Sanders played by Tony Breitenbach won the costume contest, with Ellen Ripley played by Anna Scheidel as a close runner-up. Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to the External Grant fund! Stay tuned for another trivia event to contribute to the External Grant fund this semester.



Winter Potluck

By: Kylie Hampton

In addition to the Fall Picnic, Phi Sigma hosted a Winter Potluck as our annual end of the semester event. The Winter Potluck is another Phi Sigma tradition filled with lots of great food, new members, ugly holiday sweaters, and white elephant gifts! All attendees were asked to bring a dish of their choosing to accompany the turkey and ham provided by Phi Sigma. The guests lived up to their reputation by bringing many delicious dishes to make it a tasteful dinner!

Shortly after dinner, the new members of Phi Sigma were inducted. Congratulations to Jessica Burkhart, Meghan Freund, Josselyn Gonzalez, Emma Hartness, Amanda Klingler, Kaylee Kuzelka, Dottie Nesbitt, Brie Ocegüera Perez, Jessica Ortiz, Isabella Watts, and Dalton Williams for officially being inducted into the Phi Sigma Beta Lambda Chapter!



After the induction, a handful of creative individuals participated in an ugly holiday sweater contest and those that didn't participate voted on their favorite holiday sweater. All holiday sweaters were impressive, making it a hard decision (we saw everything from llamas to Sadd-ta). This year's winner of the holiday sweater contest was Rachel DiPietro and her homemade sweater with birds, nests, and real birdfeed (pictured to the right)!

At the end of the night, the white elephant gift exchange took place consisting of 30+ wrapped gifts to choose from. We saw lots of hot cocoa, a Stupid Deaths board game, an automatic wine opener, and even a potty piano! Thank you to everyone who attended for making it a wonderful evening filled with great food and lots of laughs!

Upcoming Outreach Opportunity: ScoutReach Science Day

By: Rosario Marroquin-Flores

This semester we have an upcoming outreach opportunity with ScoutReach for those that are interested! ScoutReach provides after-school styled activities at no extra cost for at-risk youth in the Peoria and Bloomington areas. A Boy Scouts of America affiliate, ScoutReach provides opportunities for learning outdoor skills (camping, fire safety, bird identification) as well as life skills, such as learning about nutrition and fitness or understanding what to do in the case of an emergency.

Phi Sigma will be organizing a ScoutReach Science Day, to provide a fun and interactive introduction to science for the Scouts which will include specimens from the ISU specimen collection, seed bombs, and other activities. We would like volunteers to assist in set up/break down, as well as running and planning fun events for the kids! Our tentative date is April 6th, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm at the Miller Park Pavilion.

Please contact our Social Chair at ramarro@ilstu.edu if you are interested in participating! If you would like more information or are interested in becoming more involved with ScoutReach, please visit: www.wdboyce.org/scoutreach.30254 or contact Jordan Norton (423-972-5394), jordan.norton@scouting.org.

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