



PHI SIGMA NEWS

The Official Phi Sigma Newsletter

Fall 2017

A Letter From The President

Logan Sauers

One of the first and primary goals this year's executive board is providing sufficient and advanced notice for all events. In doing so, we hope that it allows faculty, staff, and students more time and flexibility with their schedule so we can increase event attendance. In order to accomplish this goal, the executive board will create and distribute the Phi Sigma Newsletter.

In this newsletter you will find a recap of events from the last semester, along with the schedule for upcoming events this year. This first issue of our newsletter will introduce you to the new executive board, along with highlighting their work and plans. This issue features Marc Ashford's work with Teaching Assistant Training Week, Phi Sigma's successes from the year prior, and anticipated events to come this year.

I look forward to this coming school year and I hope everyone was able to enjoy their summer. As always if you have any comments or suggestions for the Phi Sigma Honor Society please feel free to contact me!



Thank you to everyone who volunteered at ParkLands! See page 2 for full story on Phi Sigma's welcome week events.

IMPORTANT DATES

FALL 2017

September 18

Membership applications open

September 23

Fall Picnic

September 29

Membership applications close

October 20

Spooky Trivia Night

December 9

Winter Potluck

SPRING 2018

February 12

Weigel and Mockford-Thompson submissions open

Membership applications open

February 23

Membership applications close

March 2

Weigel and Mockford-Thompson submissions close

April 13

Phi Sigma Research Symposium

April 28

Spring Banquet

2017 Grant Award Recipients

Mockford-Thompson

Nick Rhoades

Kiran Tiwari

Ashley Waring

Weigel

Swathi Avula

Abigail Benson

Tony Breitenbach

Kristin Duffield

Maliheh Esfahanian

Jessica Fowler

Casey Gahrs

Chris Goldsmith

Joshua Hill

Brice Jarvis

Pooja Kadaba Ranganath

Michaela McGinn

Christy Moore

Dylan Poorboy

Logan Sauers

Cody Scholtens

Kiran Tiwari

Kerrigan Tobin

Ashley Waring

Beth Weber

Phi Sigma thanks Dr. Alysia Vrailas-Mortimer for serving as the Chair on the review committee. We would also like to thank Dr. Borowicz, Dr. Cook, Dr. Edwards, Dr. Gougis, Dr. Hammond, Dr. N. Mortimer, Dr. Nichols, Dr. Platz, Dr. Sedbrook, Dr. Stein, Dr. Vidal-Gadea, and Dr. Vogel for reviewing Mockford-Thompson applications. We additionally thank everyone who helped review Weigel applications.

First Annual Trivia Fundraiser

Last spring semester, Phi Sigma Honor Society pioneered one of its first philanthropy events, aimed at giving back at the Bloomington-Normal Community. This event consisted of a Trivia Night hosted at Ironwood Country Club, in which numerous teams made up of faculty, staff, and graduate students battled to become the departmental trivia champions.

Ultimately, the "Trivial Pursuits" came in first place. Second place went to "So fly, fun guy" and "*Lespedeza can-you-not-a*" rounded out the top 3. Thank you to all the teams that showed up to Phi Sigma's first attempt at hosting a trivia night.

While new events, much like new research projects, are fun and exciting, they never seem to go exactly as planned. The trivia night left room for improvement in future years due to issues such as a lack of a PA system and some excessively challenging questions.

Despite the troubles, the event received mostly positive reviews from those who remember it and managed to raise \$700 for local schools' science departments. Our Phi Sigma business manager, Kara Hodges, and our social chair, Marc Ashford, will be working on another trivia night on October 20th with a Halloween theme!

TA Training and Welcome Week

Last year, Phi Sigma hosted a variety of events for graduate students during TA training week. These events took place after TA training days and included a sports day and pizza dinner. This year, Fall 2017, Phi Sigma's social chair, Marc Ashford, improved this annual tradition by organizing several events for new and returning graduate students to mingle.



Wednesday evening, Phi Sigma hosted a pizza party at Firehouse Pizza, which had a great turnout.

On Thursday evening, the graduate students faced off in a physics challenge of sorts; bowling at the Illinois State University Bowling and Billiards Center.

On Friday, the grad students met up to "discuss complicated scientific concepts" at a house party hosted by Phi Sigma president, Logan Sauers.

Saturday, August 19th, Phi Sigma organized a volunteer opportunity with one of our favorite nearby foundations, ParkLands. A group of 11 graduate students headed to Lexington to help remove invasive species. This event was the highlight of the New Graduate Welcome Week as it also helped to expand the community service performed by the Phi Sigma Honor Society. We anticipate organizing more volunteer opportunities like this in the future and thank everyone that came out to help!



Meet the 2017-2018 Phi Sigma Executive Board



President: Logan Sauers

"I am excited to work with the new board and the department this semester to provide events that are fun and beneficial to all faculty and students. I work in Dr. Sadd's lab of Disease Ecology and Evolution, but can at times be found lurking in Dr. Juliano's laboratory. I enjoy cooking when I have free time, and think ultimate Frisbee is the best sport.. I look forward to working on improving departmental communication and hope to grow the size of our research symposium this year. If you have any suggestions or questions regarding Phi Sigma feel free to email me."



Vice President: Rachel Sparks

"I'm a masters-turned-PhD student in the Gougis lab, where I am studying the effects of implementing a new instructional model on introductory biology students' conceptual change regarding evolutionary theory. Outside of my work, I enjoy traveling, hiking, being a belligerent fan of all things Cleveland, and am embarrassingly obsessed with Star Trek. I am also the proud mother of a beautiful and sassy cat named Luna Litterpaws Sparks, who I think my friends like more than they like me. This year, I am looking forward to increasing our recruitment and retention efforts, particularly among undergraduate students, taking an active role in planning the Research Symposium, and annoying all of you on Facebook!"



Social Chair: Marc Ashford

"I am involved in research regarding reptilian immunology. I specifically focus on the presence of the phagocytic B cell in adult *Trachemys scripta* (red eared slider) and also study gut immunity in hatchlings. I enjoy being active, watching superhero movies, grilling, and cooking. I'm always up for a way to take normal meals to the next level. This year, I'm excited to plan social events that will bring all of Phi Sigma together for laughs and good memories!"



Treasurer: Ashley Waring

"I am a masters student working with Dr. Nate Mortimer, where we study immunology in fruit flies. I am also the proud mother of an Australian Shepherd and miniature donkey. In my spare time I enjoy working out, doing spray paint art, riding my dirt bike, being sarcastic, entertaining all of my lab members with my weird antics, and spending time with my best friend Luna (VP Sparks' cat). During my term as Treasurer, I am determined to keep Phi Sigma's budget as balanced as possible, as well as design the coolest t-shirts Phi Sigma has ever had. "



Business & Bookstore Manager: Kara Hodges

"I am a masters student working in the avian ecology lab under Drs. Sakaluk and Thompson. My research focuses on the signal significance of eggshell pigmentation in house wrens. In my spare time I enjoy running, writing, and worrying about all the other things she should be doing (but not enough to actually do them). I currently have a fish named Clyde, a hamster named Lucky, two cockroaches, and a very stupid but much-loved dog named Gabby. I look forward to selling lots of course packs and making bank."



Secretary: Kerrigan Tobin

"I am masters student in the Sadd Infectious Disease Ecology lab studying the effects of temperature shifts on immunity and survival in bumblebees. I accidentally acquired three cats and one tarantula so they are my life. I partake in the art of crochet, love both Pokemon-go and geocaching, and have crafted award-winning "ugly" holiday sweaters. I'm excited to put my crafting efforts and quirky sense of humor to use as editor-in-chief of the 2017 Boobologist."

A Letter From Our Advisors

Ryan Paitz

Nathan and I are excited to be serving as Phi Sigma advisors for the upcoming school year. Our goal is to provide the assistance needed to ensure Phi Sigma can support student research and scholarship. There are a number of current factors that make it especially important to provide students opportunities (financial, social, professional) to grow as scientists. Being an organization that is run by student volunteers, part of our role as advisors is to make sure the board is finding the proper balance between Phi Sigma responsibilities and all of the other responsibilities that go with being a graduate student. By promoting organization, communication, and shared responsibility, Nate 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." Nate Mortimer



"I am a first 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

Phi Sigma Constitution Revisions

The Phi Sigma executive board is in the process of reviewing and revising our constitution. Once we have finalized our proposed amendments, they will be made available to the general Phi Sigma members and will need to be voted on.

We are excited to help keep the Phi Sigma constitution relevant, and reflective of what we do as an organization. Revising the constitution will help to allocate responsibilities, clarify eligibility for our honor society, and improve organization.

As we move through this process, the Phi Sigma executive board will be in communication with our members about the necessary steps for this process.

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Visit us on the web at <http://phisigasociety.org/>

We now have a ReggieNet site. It hosts resources like an up to date calendar, pictures from recent events, and more! This portal can be used for turning in applications, nominating/voting for future executive boards, and so much more. You can access it on ReggieNet by clicking "sites" and clicking on "BSC Phi Sigma, Beta Lambda" under the header "Projects". Contact Rachel Sparks with questions or suggestions.