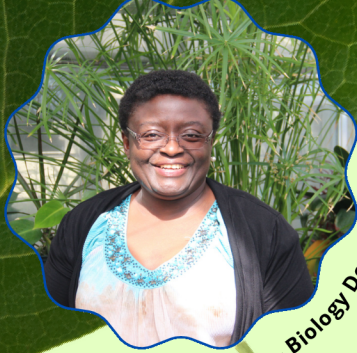


Biological Sciences Newsletter

FALL 2026

Chairperson's Corner



Dr. Joyce Ache Gana - Biology Dept. Chair

Welcome...

to the Fall 2026 semester!
I hope you had an enjoyable summer.

My goal is to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment in our department; one defined by cheerfulness, collaboration, and a strong sense of community.

Our department graduated 14 students with B.S. and 2 with M.S. in the 2025-2026 academic year.

Kyra Adenekan, a 2026 graduate from the Biology: Secondary Education option, passed her Illinois Teacher Licensure Board Exam and accepted a teaching position with the Chicago Public Schools.

During the CSU Spring Honors Convocation, many biology students were recognized for high academic achievements.

I am thankful to our dedicated faculty and staff who worked above and beyond to ensure student success in academic and co-curricular activities.

I encourage all students to join and become active in the Biological Society, our department's student run club. This will help you to grow your leadership and service skills that will strengthen your resume. Visit the department's website news and events site to learn of student leaders (<https://www.csu.edu/bioprehealth/news.htm>).



Arbor Day 2026 - Morton Arboretum Partnership with CSU - pg #16

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Graduation application deadline for undergraduate and graduate students is **October 30th** for Fall 2026 degree conferral.

Apply to Scheinbuks Scholarship: The deadline is Friday, **September 30th** at **5:00PM.**

For additional information, please contact Dr. Andrew Maselli at amaselli@csu.edu.

Biological Sciences Newsletter FALL 2026

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Dr. Julian Scheinbuks Scholarship

Dr. Julian Scheinbuks was a part of the Department of Biological Sciences faculty at CSU from 1989-2003. His great love was teaching and working with students. He taught various biology courses for 13 years. In 2003, he was appointed the Director of Distance Learning. Under his leadership, a small and developing operation was transformed into a successful department within the Library and Instruction Services.

Upon Dr. Scheinbuks passing in 2010, he donated \$1 million dollars towards Biology student scholarships for distance learning innovation. As a memorial to Julian, the campus community has planted a native burr oak tree. A leaf from that tree is the symbol of the Scholars Program. Every year, the department gives merit-based scholarships to students through an application process. Applicants are awarded based on academics and service.

Scheinbuks Scholarship Recipients 2025-2026
\$2000/award

All the Scheinbuks' scholars received an award at the Honors Convocation



Danyal Akbar
Lisa Daniel
Ashley Gorris (Grad)
Daisy Hernandez
Bryonna Jackson
Joseph James
Essence Jones
Deja Louis
Joy Mayes
Taylor Reese
Diana Sanchez (Grad)



Keynote Speaker

Dr. Daniel Llano, MD, PhD, is a physician-scientist and Professor of Molecular & Integrative Physiology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign



Biological Sciences Newsletter

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69th Honors Convocation April 2026 University-wide Awards

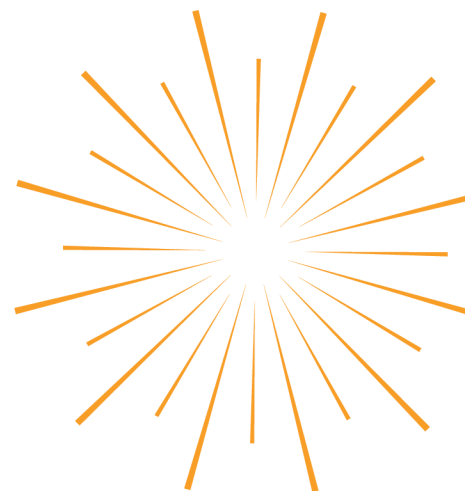
Departmental Honor and Merit Awards

Department of Biological Sciences

Certificate of Honor
Daisy Hernandez

Certificate of Merit
Mia Martinez
Kathleen Flores
Danyal Akbar

Graduate Award
Ashley Gorris
Zoe Leone
Diana Sanchez



Biological Sciences Newsletter

FALL 2026

69th Annual Honors Convocation April 18th, 2026

Departmental Awards

Department of Biological Sciences

Dr. Devi Potluri Student Award

This award is named in honor of Dr. Devi Potluri, former Chair of the Department of Biological Sciences, to recognize outstanding overall academic excellence in an undergraduate Biology student.

Daisy Hernandez

Herbert E. Smith Memorial Award

The Herbert E. Smith Memorial Award was established in his memory to honor minority science majors who have demonstrated outstanding scholarships and intend to pursue graduate studies in the biological and physical sciences.

Mia Martinez

Marian Wilson-Comer Award

This award is given to an undergraduate Biology student who has demonstrated extensive departmental service and/or participation in student groups.

Dominique Moore

Walter P. Trost Memorial Award

This award is given to an undergraduate Biology student who has demonstrated extensive departmental service and/or participation in student groups.

Gabrielle Cole



Biological Sciences Newsletter

FALL 2026



69th Annual Honors Convocation April 18th, 2026

Departmental Awards

Department of Biological Sciences

Faculty Choice Award in BIOL 1701

This faculty-selected award recognizes outstanding student achievement in Introduction to Biology I course, BIOL 1701

Isabelle Lawrence

Faculty Choice Award in BIOL 2020

This faculty-selected award recognizes outstanding student achievement in Anatomy and Physiology I course, BIOL 2020

Masturah Raheemson

Faculty Choice Award in BIOL 3072

This faculty-selected award recognizes outstanding student achievement in the Ecology course, BIOL 3072

Daisy Hernandez

Joseph James

Outstanding Freshman Award

This award recognizes outstanding academic achievement by a freshman undergraduate Biology student.

Isabelle Lawrence

Outstanding Junior Award

This award recognizes outstanding academic achievement by a junior undergraduate Biology student.

Kyetrel Glass

Jakwanna Payne

Outstanding Junior Award-BIOT Major

This award recognizes outstanding academic achievement by a junior undergraduate Biology-Secondary Education student.

Cassandra Snyder

Biological Sciences Newsletter FALL 2026

Congratulations 2025 to 2026 Graduates

14 (BS) and 2 (MS) students

Fall 2025

B.S Degree
Biology

***Vivian Cox
Laketrius Guidry
Deyja Jackson***

Biology - Premedical/Pre-dental

***Bryonna Jackson
Xavier Lyons***

Spring 2026

B.S Degree
Biology

***Lisa Daniels
Daisy Hernandez
Idris Muhammad***

Biology- Premedical/Pre-dental

***Julianne Arballo
Deja Louis
Dominique Moore***

Summer 2026

B.S Degree
Biology

***Kelci Merritt
Kenya Williams***

*Biology: Secondary
Education*

Kyra Adenekan

M.S. Degree
***Ashley Gorris
Zoe Leone***



Whereabouts of Class of 2025-2026

Kyra Adeneka, BS, 2026, High School Teacher at King College Prep High School.

Kelci Merritt, BS, 2026, Started CSU PharmD program Fall 2026

Ashley Gorris, MS, 2026, Laboratory Technician,

Zoe Leone, MS, 2026, Starting PhD Program at University of Illinois in Chicago

Biological Sciences Newsletter FALL 2026

Undergraduate Students Engaged in Summer 2026 Programs

University of IL Urbana- Champaign AREES-Summer Research Internship

Jakwanna Payne
Jaylyn-Rose Mason (Minor: Biology)

Northwestern University and American Heart Association

Kyetrel Glass

Northwestern University/Mesulam Institute for Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer's Disease.

Jewel Foreman
Shontasia Henderson
Diana Sanchez
Taylor Wiley

CINSER AI Summer Internship at the Field Museum-MAPS: Machine-learning for Accessing and Processing

Specimen data
Domonique Vaughn

CSU Saurabh Lab- ICLES Summer Research

Essence Jones
Mia Martinez

CSU Brain Bootcamp: Summer Research
with NIH Grant

Britinae Lacy
Nettesha Watkins
Aryaman Rajnish
Letrecia Ajede
Kathleen Flores
Martesia Carter
Tiara Dunbar
Taylor Reese
Kendryl Williams (Biochemistry major)

CSU Carroll Lab - Summer Research
Tiara Dunbar



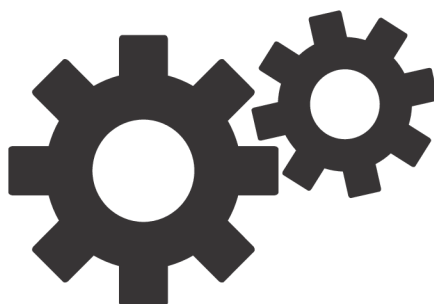
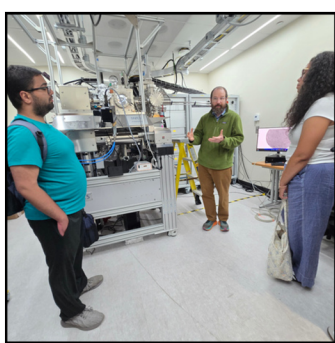
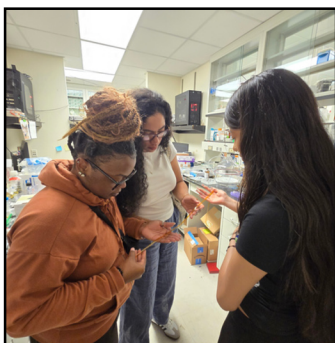
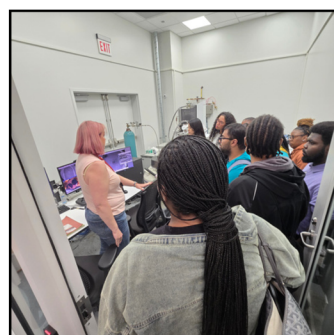
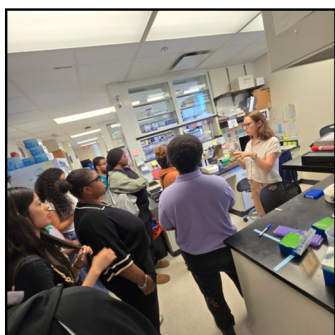
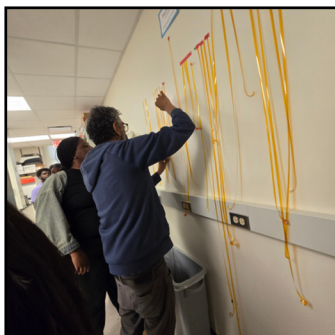
Biological Sciences Newsletter FALL 2026

Undergraduate Students Engaged in Summer 2026 Programs

Summer Brain Bootcamp

In July, students from the CSU participated in four-day brain boot camp. Activities included a day-long field trip to the University of Chicago for tours of the Advanced Electron Microscopy Facility and several research labs. Students also had the opportunity to interact with University of Chicago Graduate students to discuss the path through a Ph.D program. Drs. Bobby Kasthuri, Gregg Wildenberg and Joseph Gogola from the University of Chicago visited CSU and helped students explore big ideas and key concepts in Neuroscience. Students learned about the emerging field of connectomics and then experienced the tools that allow brain mapping using three-dimensional volume electron microscopy data sets. Dr. Briana Carroll and Dr. FNU Sumit Saurabh facilitated brain based activities. The goal was to give students a brief exposure to the array of disciplines that contribute to cutting edge neuroscience research. The Neuroscience immersion activities were supported by an NIH Brain Connects research grant that includes labs from the University of Chicago, Chicago State University and University of Illinois Chicago.

-Contributed by Dr. Andrew Maselli

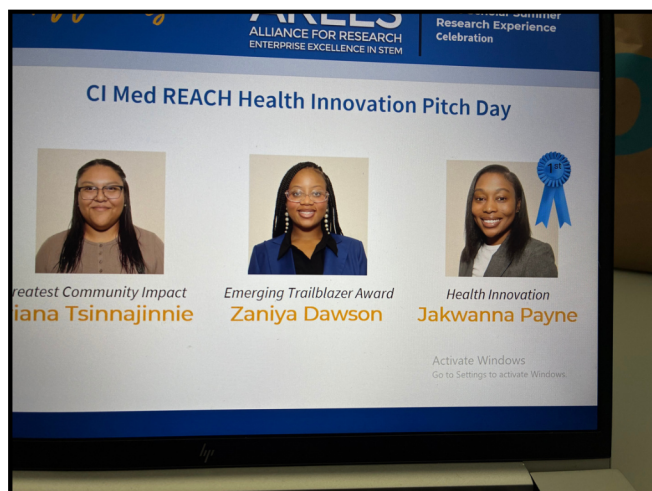


Biological Sciences Newsletter FALL 2026

Undergraduate Students Engaged in Summer 2026 Programs



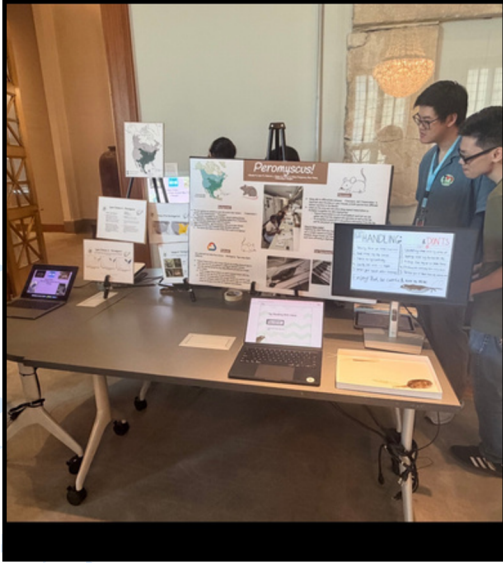
Students at Northwestern University/Mesulam Institute for Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer's Disease



Domonique et al at the Field Museum summer internship

Biological Sciences Newsletter FALL 2026

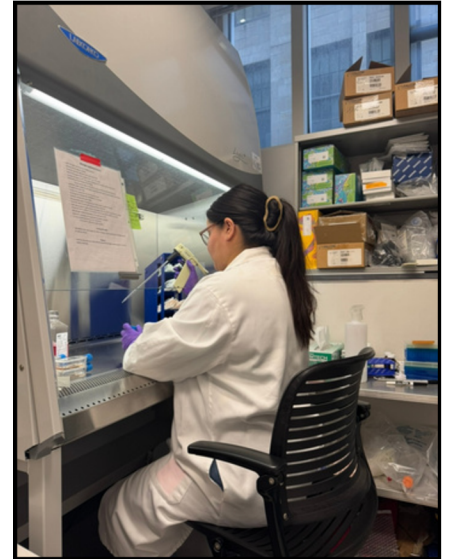
Undergraduate Students Engaged in Summer 2026 Programs



Domonique Vaughn



Taylor Wiley



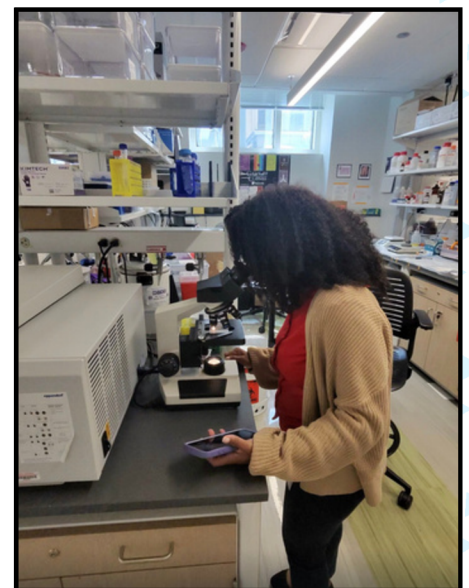
Diana Sanchez



Diana Sanchez



Shontasia Henderson



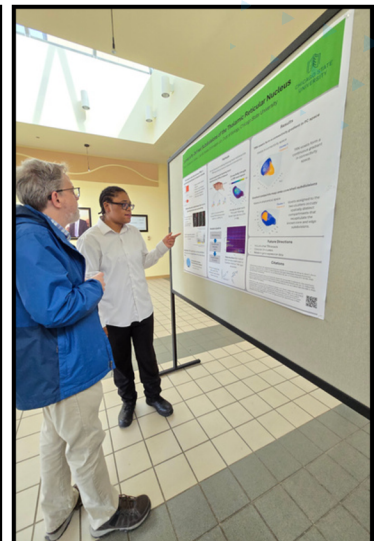
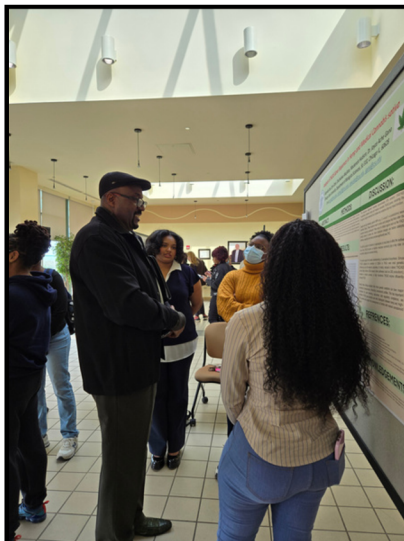
Jewel Foreman

Biological Sciences Newsletter FALL 2026

CSU Research Day (April 9, 2026)



Zyra Clark and Gabrielle Cole share their research with President Z. Scott



MacKenzie Hudson, Zyra Clark, Gabrielle Cole, Tiara Dunbar, and Daisy Hernandez share their research

Biological Sciences Newsletter

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Biological Society: Biological Society Organized Events 2025 to 2026

Last year, the Biology Society had an exciting year. We focused on helping students connect with one another and make the most of their experiences as STEM students. Throughout the year, we invited many different speakers from fields such as medicine and veterinary medicine to share their experiences and give students a better idea of what different careers in the sciences can look like. We also welcomed the MedXplore internship and I Am Able Medical Mentor Program, which are programs focused on supporting healthcare students by providing mentorship, guidance, exposure, and resources to help students navigate the pre-med and medical school journey, along with many other healthcare fields of interest, while working to bridge the gap between underserved communities and healthcare. Through our partnership with Sneakers to Scrubs, student-athletes also learned how they can give back by mentoring middle and high school athletes, sharing their experiences, and encouraging younger students to see science as an exciting and meaningful career path. Our Spring Mixer brought biology students, faculty, and department chairs together for networking, conversations about research opportunities, mentorship, and building relationships that could open doors for students in the future. We also held study sessions throughout the year and ended the semester with a fun and memorable Earth Week, including a scavenger hunt, a paint-and-sip where students decorated flowerpots and took home plants, and an Arbor Day tree-planting event to give back to our campus. Overall, the Biology Society was about more than academics; we created a space where students could meet new people, build friendships, discover opportunities, connect with faculty and career-focused professionals, and feel encouraged to continue pursuing their goals in biology, healthcare, and the sciences.

(Contributed by Kyetrel Glass, Current President of Biological Society)

Elections of new officers for 2026 to 2027

- President: Kyetrel Glass
- Vice President: Mackenzie Hudson
- Secretary: Diana Sanchez
- Standby Secretary: Nettesha Watkins
- Treasurer: Ashanti Bean
- Chief Media Coordinator: Jayla Ware
- Assistant Media Coordinator: Trinity Jones
- Chief Ambassador: Zyra Clark
- Student Ambassadors: Dejanae Butler and Britinae Lacy
- Standby Ambassador: Mia Martinez
- Student Advisor: Gabrielle Cole
- Faculty Advisor: Dr. Megan Garfinkel



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Biological Society: Biological Society Organized Events 2025 to 2026



Dr. Gordon shares valuable insights on healthcare careers, paid internships and clinical opportunities through Advocate Health Care



University of Chicago graduate school rep and grad students share the PhD admissions process with opportunities with Bio Society



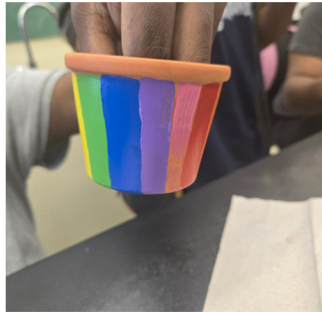
CSU biology alumni Luis Garcia and Madalyne Juarez share the IAMABLE programs to bolster admissions to Medical School with Bio Society



Biological Sciences Newsletter FALL 2026

Biological Society: Earth Week Activities

During Earth Week, the Biological Society organized a fun "Pot decor and plant activity. Participants unleashed their creative hands as seen in the display below.



Gabrielle and Mackenzie:
Organizers



Biological Sciences Newsletter FALL 2026

Celebration of Arbor Day by a partnership between Morton Arboretum and CSU



Biological Society student leaders Gabbriel Cole and Kyetrel Glass presented the history of Arbor Day. President Z. Scott, Provost Feist-Price, Dean Smith, Department of Biological Sciences Chair Gana along with President of the Morton Arboretum made remarks on CSU Arbor Day. Morton Arboretum staff demonstrated proper tree planting strategies.



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Celebration of Arbor Day by a partnership between Morton Arboretum and CSU



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FALL 2026

Graduate Student Corner

MSc Thesis Defenses

Zoe Leone

Title: Analyzing Urban Deer Mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) Diets in Chicago's Slag Dump Sites

Date: June 09, 2026

Thesis Committee: Dr. Molly McDonough, (Thesis Advisor); Dr. Megan Garfinkel, Dr. Sophie Picq at the Field Museum

Ashley Gorris

Title: Investigating the Spatio-Temporal Distribution of Boreapox Virus in the Holarctic Realm

Date: June 23, 2026

Thesis Committee: Dr. Molly McDonough (Thesis Advisor), Dr. Chris Botanga, Dr. Mark Erhart, Yoshinori Nakazawa (Center for Disease Control and Prevention), Jeffrey Doty (Center for Disease Control and Prevention)

MSc Thesis Proposal Defenses

Aryaman Rajnish

Title: ALS mutations in UBQLN2 and SOD1 and proteinopathy in *C. elegans*.

Thesis Committee: Dr. Anser Azim (Thesis Advisor), Dr. Andrew Maselli, Dr. Sumit Saurabh

Date: Spring 2026

Zuri Allen

Title: Molecular phylogenetics of *Peromyscus* (Rodentia: Nesomyidae).

Thesis Committee: Dr. Molly McDonough (Thesis Advisor), Dr. Mark Erhart, Dr. Gana, and Dr. Adam Ferguson at the Field Museum

Martasia Carter

Title: Characterizing UBQLN1 and UBQLN2 in LPS-Stimulated Macrophages: Protein Expression, Intracellular Localization and Molecular Complexation with COX-2

Thesis Committee: Dr. Anser Azim (Thesis Advisor), Dr. Megan Garfinkel, Dr. Obayed Raihan



Biological Sciences Newsletter

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Faculty Accomplishments

Published Articles

AmiriRad, M., Jannesar, M., **Botanga, C.**, Niknam, V., & Seyedi, S. M. (2026). Sex-specific physiological and molecular responses to salinity stress in pistachio (*Pistacia vera* L.) seedlings. *Environmental and Experimental Botany*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0098847226000894>

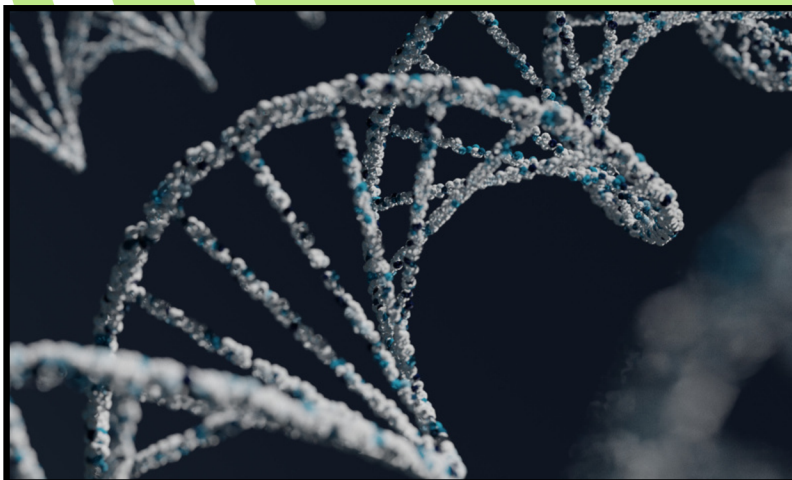
Hosler, S.C., **Garfinkel, M.**, Roberts, M. et al. (2026) Suburban land management impacts bee community composition and cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*) pollination. *Urban Ecosystems* 29, 100 . <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11252-026-01953-1>

Rooney, B., R. Kays, M. V. Cove, et al. (more than 100 authors, including **McDonough M. M.**) (2026) "SNAPSHOT USA 2024: Year 6 of the Coordinated National Camera Trap Survey of the United States." *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 35, no. 4: e70229. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geb.70229>.

Roopsind, I., Ferguson, A. W., **McDonough, M. M.**, de Souza, L. S., Oakley, R. E., Millar, N., ... & Hallett, M. T. (2026). First records of a cottontail rabbit in Guyana: ecology and conservation of *Sylvilagus parentum* Ruedas, 2017 from South Rupununi. *Mammalia*, <https://doi.org/10.1515/mammalia-2025-0100>

Whelan C.J., **Garfinkel M.** (2026) Climate-driven changes in resources shift reproductive season and effort of insectivorous montane bird species. *Global Change Biology*. 2026 Jul;32(7):e71013. doi: 10.1111/gcb.71013

Sumit Saurabh, Charlene Y. P. Guerrero, Madelyn R. Cusick, Amanda J. Samaras, Taylor M. Stephenson, Sebastian L. Kirkpatrick, Gregory J. Matthews, Daniel J. Cavanaugh (2026) Circadian rhythms of metabolite abundance in *Drosophila* are largely driven by time of feeding (FJ-26-0306). *FEBS Journal*. Accepted



Biological Sciences Newsletter

FALL 2026

Faculty Accomplishments

Grants Awarded

Christopher Botanga-Walder Foundation

Project titled: The Illinois Consortium for Life and Environmental Sciences (ICLES).

Duration: The funding is for two years. 2026 to 2028

Amount: \$500,000.00

Sumit Saurabh - NIH Major Instrumentation Grant.

Start Date: 2026 End Date: 2027

Project Title: Acquire the Evident Scientific FLUOVIEW FV4000 Inverted Confocal Laser Scanning Microscope

Amount: \$250,000.00

Molly McDonough (PI), NSF Career Award

Start Date: 05/15/2023 End Date: 04/30/2028

Project Title: CAREER: Museomic approach for exploring the evolution of past, persistent, and emerging orthopoxvirus outbreaks

Grant status: Renewed for Third Year 2026 to 2027

Total Intended Award Amount: \$1,031,852

Andrew Maselli and collaborators at the University of Chicago received an NIH grant

Title: NIH "BRAIN CONNECTS: Photoemission Electron Microscopy for Connectomics"

Start Date: 2024 to 2027

Total Intended Amount: \$1,609,558

Grant Status: Renewed for Second Year 2026 to 2027

Mark Erhart was named CSU Faculty Coordinator for the NIH – funded UChicago IRACDA Program grant, after the PHS restored / extended funding for one additional year.

Grants Submitted

C. Botanga. Submitted a collaborative grant with UIUC:

Title: Mechanisms of thalamic reticular modulation of auditory thalamocortical signaling.

Dates: May 2026 to May 2029.

C. Botanga and Co-PI submitted an NSF Proposal "S-STEM: Building Graduate Engineering Pathways from Chicago State University and City Colleges of Chicago to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign". \$5 million.

Status, Pending

Molly McDonough Submitted a Fulbright application on 15 September 2025 to conduct research with a collaborator at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. Not Funded

Dr. Gana submitted a grant (\$50,000) to Cannabis Research Institute on 05/15/26.

Title: Using hemp as proxy for cannabis research, outreach, and workforce development. Not Funded.

Biological Sciences Newsletter

FALL 2026

Faculty Accomplishments

Published Abstracts and Presentations

Anser Azim. Management of Pemphigus vulgaris in a diabetic patient. Autumn Immunology Conference (AIC). 11/21/2025 to 11/25/2025.

Megan Garfinkel (Invited speaker). Midwest Birds Course Webinar Lesson 3-- Birds in the Balance: Pest Control Services Across Crop Types. Webinar Series presented by Wild Farm Alliance. 4 November 2025.

Keenah Moncreace, Alfredo J Garcia, Gregg Wildenberg, Narayanan "Bobby" Kasthuri, Andrew Maselli (2026) Dark neuron morphology in the brains of fentanyl-treated mice (2026) Annual Scientific Meeting Society for Neuroscience Chicago Chapter. February 27th University of Illinois Chicago Host.

Taylor Reese, Gregg Wildenberg, Narayanan "Bobby" Kasthuri, Andrew Maselli (2026) Spatial Arrangement of Glial in the Optic Nerve Using Volume Electron Microscopy. 2026 Annual Scientific Meeting Society for Neuroscience Chicago Chapter. February 27th University of Illinois Chicago Host.

Mia Martinez, Sumit Saurabh (2026) - The Acute Effects of Forever Chemicals on the Sleep Behavior of *Drosophila melanogaster*. Annual Scientific Meeting Society for Neuroscience Chicago Chapter. February 27th University of Illinois Chicago

Mia Martinez, Sumit Saurabh (2026) - The Acute Effects of Forever Chemicals on the Sleep Behavior of *Drosophila melanogaster*. STEM DAY February 06, 2026, Chicago State University.

CSU Students Research Day Presentations April 09, 2026

1. Daisy M. Hernandez (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Garfinkel)
2. Gabrielle Cole, Zyra Clark, Mackenzie Hudson (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Gana)
3. Tiara L Dunbar (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Carroll)
4. Zoe S. Leone (Faculty Mentor: Dr. McDonough)
5. Ashley Gorris (Faculty Mentor: Dr. McDonough)
6. Martasia Carter (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Azim)
7. Mia Martinez (Faculty Member: Dr. Sumit Saurabh)

Dunbar, T. & Carroll B. (2026). Function of Transthalamic Pathway in Visual Information Processing. Poster. University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium. April 17, 2026

Biological Sciences Newsletter FALL 2026

Faculty Accomplishments: Other Activities

FNU Sumit Saurabh invited guest lecturer David Li-Kroger (Baylor College of Medicine, TX) who is an expert in CRISPR-Cas9 technology to share his experience and provide support for the CAPSTONE course.

Dr. Joyce Ache Gana participated in IAI Panel for non-majors life sciences meeting on October 24, 2025.

Dr. Joyce Ache Gana participated in the Education Day Involvement Fair on November, 05, 2025.

Dr. Joyce Ache Gana participated in a recruitment event at Olive Harvey College on November 12, 2025.

FNU Sumit Saurabh took students in his Biology Capstone course (BIOL 4801) to visit the Northwestern University Mesulam Institute of Cognitive Neurology on November 12, 2025.

Dr. Molly McDonough and 12 Scientific Inquiry (BIOL 2400) students and two Learning Assistants (LAs) conducted data collection in the Field Museum's mammal collection on November 7 and 14, 2025.

Dr. Botanga and team organized a well-attended STEM Day on February 06, 2026. (See Pictures Page??)

Dr. Joyce Ache Gana presented/participated at CSU STEM Day February 06, 2026

Dr. FNU Sumit Saurabh Presented and conducted a Neuroscience workshop at CSU STEM Day February 06, 2026

Dr. FNU Sumit Saurabh attended CSU BESI Research Collaboration Discussion seminar with delegates from BESI foundation (Alex Matthew) (Add date????)

Dr. FNU Sumit Saurabh attended Genetics Society of America – International Conference 2026 on Drosophila Biology. (Add date???)

Dr. Molly McDonough and the Scheinbuks Scholarship Committee (Botanga, Carroll, Garfinkel) organized Scheinbuks Scholarship and Lectureship Celebration on February 26th, 2026.

Dr. Megan Garfinkel served as a panel member on the Faculty Panel Discussion on classroom access and accommodations for Disability Awareness Week, March 17th 2026.

Dr. FNU Sumit Saurabh through his professional contacts was able to secure four paid Internships through summer 2026 at Northwestern University Meshulam Institute for Alzheimer's Disease. These are competitive internships that will allow students to work directly with world-renowned researchers in the field of Alzheimer's Disease, along with making important contributions to the community.

Dr. FNU Sumit Saurabh was selected to judge the Art of Science Communication Grants for American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (Dec 2025)

Dr. FNU Sumit Saurabh attended Science Outreach and Communication Committee Meeting organized by American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (03/27/2026)

Biological Sciences Newsletter FALL 2026

Faculty Accomplishments: Other Activities Continued

Dr. FNU Sumit Saurabh's Mentee, Mia Martinez won student award for research presentation at the CSU STEM Day, February 06, 2026

Dr. Briana Carroll co-chaired a symposium on neurodegeneration, and served as judge for the graduate student symposium and neuroart competitions, at the 2026 Annual Meeting of the Chicago Society for Neuroscience.

Dr. Molly McDonough, Dr. Megan Garfinkel, and graduate student Zoe Leone attended the 2026 Southeast Side Community Science and Research Kaffeeklatsch at Big Marsh Park on March 5th 2026.

Dr. Joyce Ache Gana presented at Arbor Day 2026 co-sponsored by CSU and Morton Arboretum. Media covered this event.

Dr. Sumit Saurabh's collaboration with Northwestern University resulted in successful recruitment of four students for paid summer internships (Started May 14, 2026). Diana Sanchez, Shontasia Henderson, Taylor Wiley, and Jewel Formen

Dr. Sumit Saurabh provided research training to two students in his lab for 2026 summer. Students – Essence Jones, Jewel Formen

Dr. Sumit Saurabh volunteered and actively participated at Arbor Day 2026 co-sponsored by CSU and Morton Arboretum.

Dr. Sumit Saurabh attended Alzheimer's Day symposium organised by the Meshulam Institute for Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer's Disease at Northwestern University (May 19, 2026)

Dr. Carroll research student, Tiara Dunbar, was accepted to the Illinois Consortium of Life Sciences (ICLES) which provides funding for her research and professional development opportunities.



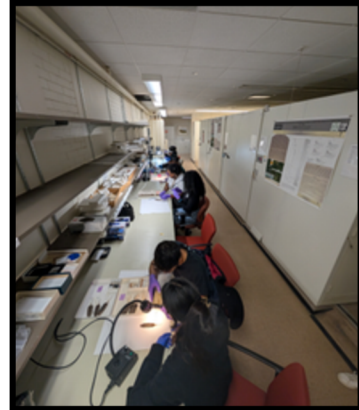
FNU Sumit Saurabh took students in his Biology Capstone course (BIOL 4801) to visit the Northwestern University Mesulam Institute of Cognitive Neurology on November 12, 2025.



Biological Sciences Newsletter

FALL 2026

Faculty Accomplishments: Other Activities Continue



Dr. Molly McDonough and 12 Scientific Inquiry (BIOL 2400) students and two Learning Assistants (LAs) conducted data collection in the Field Museum's mammal collection on November 7 and 14.



Dr. Molly McDonough and four CSU students went camping and learned field methods for monitoring mammals in Keweenaw County in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan from October 23-26th.

This trip was hosted by collaborator Dr. John Yunger at Governors State University and included participation by both undergraduate and graduate students—for many, it was their first time camping



Dr. Molly McDonough and five CSU students participated in a Governors State + Chicago State "prepathon". For this day-long event on October 11, we processed nearly 100 specimens of local rodent species collected over the past 25 years that were stored in freezers. These data will contribute toward research projects related to the prairie deer mouse for three MSc student projects for CSU and one MSc student at Illinois State.



STEM Research DAY, February 06, 2026



Dean Smith, Dr. Botanga, & Ms. Baldrige



President Scott interacting with attendees



Biological Society Leadership (seating)



Mia Martinez won an award
for her research presentation

Homewood Flossmoor High School Visit April 2026



Dr. Gana with Homewood Flossmoor students at the CSU Greenhouse



Dr. Walters orchestrates a tour of the Chicago State campus for students from Homewood-Flossmoor Highschool. We thank Dr. Walters for consistent service to the department post retirement.



Leonel is engaging students at the greenhouse with "smell and tell" plant identification activity



Dr. Maselli with Homewood Flossmoor students at the CSU Scannin Electron Microscope Facility

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Engaging Summer Campers 2026

Summer Enrichment program of the Chicago Pre-College Science and Engineering program with 7, 8, 9 graders



Dr. Gana engaged students with “Smell and Tell” greenhouse plant identification activity

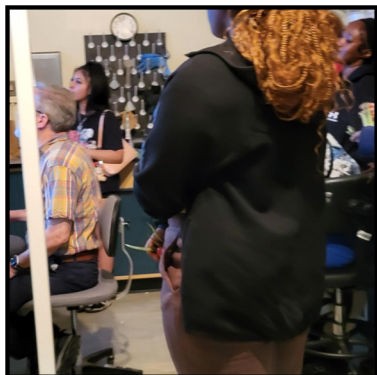


Ms. Gabrielle Phoenix engaged students with a pH of household liquid lab activity

Health Professions Explorers Summer Camp 2026



Dr. Maselli and Mr. Leonel Loeza engaged campers with SEM and Greenhouse activities



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Greenhouse Volunteers

Zuri, a graduate student in the department, is a dedicated volunteer in the greenhouse. Zuri played an active role in propagating a variety of plant species. One of her proudest accomplishments was successfully rooting her first *Tradescantia zebrina* from shoot cuttings. These plants now brighten the department office and the third-floor hallway. Zuri also grew *Monstera deliciosa* from seed, a first for this species in the CSU greenhouse.



Zuri with seed-grown *Monstera* plants



Greenhouse Plants



Student government grooming plants

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At the CSU Prairie... Prescribed Prairie Burn



Dr. Gana pictured with Pizzo and Associates who Conducted a controlled fire eliminating invasive plants and insect species



Special Thanks to Kelvin Avilez and all of the CSU Grounds team that assisted the CSU Biology Department to prepare for the prairie burn. We appreciate your hard work in helping to make this possible!



Leonel cutting down many invasive "Trees of Heaven"



Mr. Michael Holmes and the burn specialist



Plants Returned Beautifully after the Prairie Burn

