News from the Biology Department at Northeastern Illinois University

Department Happenings

- **March 2nd**: SCSE Womxn in STEM Panel and Networking Event
- **March 8th**: Advanced registration begins, abstract submission deadline for the Student Research and Creative Activities Symposium
- **March 15th-20th**: NEIU Spring Break
- **March 22nd**: SCSE Summer Research and Professional Training Program Student Applications due (Faculty apps due March 15th)
- **March 23rd**: MARC Seminar. Dr. Carrie Diaz Eaton will give a talk via Zoom at 11:00AM.
- **March 27th**: Open registration begins

OVERVIEW:

- Undergraduate Student Highlight: Haider Mehdi
- Graduate Student Highlight: Rachel Scianna
- Faculty & Staff Highlight: Pam Geddes
- Deans List
- Greenhouse News

Welcome to the first monthly newsletter of the NEIU Biology Department! We will use this newsletter as a way to keep students, alumni, and supporters of NEIU Biology in the loop.
and I hated seeing it get slowly destroyed in this current climate. The biodiversity on our planet is something that I’ve loved since I could see, and gaining knowledge to understand and protect all that life is what I knew I would love to spend most of my life doing. Thus, I chose a Biology degree as I knew that would be the only field that would personally fulfill me.

Tell us about your research! My research at NEIU centers around the fuzzy Wooly Bear caterpillars, aka *Pyrharctia isabella* larva. The purpose of this project is to test a folktale about the caterpillar’s ability to predict weather severity based on their hair color, and to possibly discover a new correlation between their hair and their external materials at Home Depot.

You can find Haider Mehdi on LinkedIn.

Dr. Pam Geddes is an Associate Professor of Biology specializing in invasion ecology. She recently received a Teaching Excellence Award from NEIU.

How has your research influenced your classroom? I feel my research and classroom complement each other. To this day, I find myself providing examples, stories, and anecdotes for almost all the classes I teach about research projects I did as an undergraduate, a master’s student, a doctoral student, and as a post-doc. I hope these lived experiences infuse my teaching so that students can more easily connect the concepts we learn in class.
content I teach students everyday and to be able to expand the types of classes I can teach to students.

What do you think is the most exciting thing about learning Biology? The most exciting thing about learning biology is diving into all the current biotechnology being used to help others in this current moment. The idea that we can manipulate the machinery of other organisms such as bacteria or viruses in order to manipulate genes and potentially cure diseases is fascinating. CRISPR/Cas9 and the recently developed mRNA vaccine are just a few examples of this.

You can follow Rachel on Instagram @scianna_science and see what’s happening in her science classroom @fremd_science

Rachel Scianna is a Masters student in Biology at NEIU and is a high school biology teacher at William Fremd High School.

Why are you getting your Masters? I am getting my Master’s in Biology through NEIU to further my understanding of the

Deans List
Congratulations to all Biology students who made the Deans List for Fall 2020! These students maintained a GPA of 3.8 or above.

Tariq Abutaleb
Jennifer Adams
Sarah Al Sulaimawi
Luis Aldama
Rogelio Alvarado
Hanna Baral
Vada Becker
Patrick Brogan
Elvia Camargo
Tenzin Chosang
Colleen Dowell
Ginger Dragon
Jack Eckhorn-Martinez
Christian Fajardo
James Frale
Jonathan Garcia
Jared Gattis
Marissa Giolas
Yoshi Gonzalez
Anna Gutmanovich
Zoe Hickey
Amani Islam
Jabbar Jabbari
Mahnoor Jeewa
Kamer Kassim
Adeeba Khan
Sana Khatoon
Alexis Leach
Kelsey Littrell
Elizabeth Lopez
Usaid Mahmud
Arleen Matos
Moira McWhorter-Pusateri
David Menendez
Aseel Mohammad
Denny Nguyen
Kimberly Nu-Tall
Ezekiel Oluyadi
Shreejana Paudel
Will Peiser
Helena Puccini de Castro
Martin Raheem
Gualdupe Ramirez
Gualdupe Ruiz
Dana Salamah
Gorav Saluja
Rebecca Sheley
Ravi Sullivan-Freeman
Lin tran
Kevin Urquiza
Mahum Wazir
Marcus Yee
Carlos Zamudio

Greenhouse News
Though the weather outside is frightful, the NEIU Greenhouse is still green and active! Greenhouse staff are hard at work planting seedlings for spring. So far they’ve planted herbs (chives, basil, and oregano), bedding plants (black dragon coleus, rainbow coleus, impatiens), and native wildflowers like wild onion, zig-zag goldenrod, and wild ginger. Stay tuned for info about the Spring Plant Sale!

Follow us to learn more about what is happening in Biology!

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