

The Biology Flash

Photograph by Justin Merry

Student News

- **Tony Bellmore** ('13) is Mate at Florida Sea Base, Islamorada, FL.
- **Dr. Jared Burd** ('10) graduated from Salus University College of Optometry.
- **Michael Bresnahan** ('11) is Marine Science Instructor at Seacamp Association, Inc, Big Pine Key, FL.
- **Chad Clair** ('12) is a Masters student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania in Ecology, and is studying landscape-level distribution of woodrats.
- **Jenna Griffiths** ('12) is Molecular Genetic Laboratory Technician at Children's Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati, OH.
- **LeeAnne Haus** ('14) was accepted to the Seton Hill Physician Assistant Program.
- **Timothy Heiss** ('15) was accepted to LECOM School of Pharmacy as part of the SFU-LECOM 3+4 (B.S./Pharm.D. Program).
- **Amanda Johnson** ('14) was accepted to Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine.
- **Nicole Nastasi** ('11) is Medical Technologist at UPMC, Pittsburgh, PA.
- **Chris Nealen** ('10) is Environmental Scientist at ECS Mid-Atlantic, LLC, York, PA.
- **Mark Steinmiller** ('13) is NAUI Scuba Instructor at Seacamp, Big Pine Key, FL.

SFU Biology Affiliations Provide Path Into Professional Schools

Saint Francis Students who have interests in both laboratory science and the healthcare field have found success in the biology department's Medical Laboratory Science major. Also known as Medical Technologists, these health care professionals serve as "detectives" in the health care field, using state-of-the-art equipment to diagnose patient ailments. Students spend their first three years as undergraduates at Saint Francis. Then, in their senior year, they receive training at one of SFU's three program affiliates: the Conemaugh Health System School of Medical Technolo-

gy, the UPMC Altoona School of Medical Laboratory Science, or the WCA Hospital Laboratory Science Program.

Graduates of the Medical Laboratory Science program receive a bachelor of science from Saint Francis University after completion of their clinical year, and are highly desirable in the job market. All recent SFU students to complete this program have immediately found employment as medical technologists.

The Medical Laboratory Science program is just one of a variety of "3+" programs offered through affiliations with SFU's Biology depart-

ment. Other opportunities include affiliation agreements with Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (medical school and pharmacy school), Salus University (optometry school), and Temple University (dental school). These popular programs offer students a direct track into professional school; once admitted into the program as freshmen, students are guaranteed seats following their third year as long as they main maintain a specified GPA.

For more information on these degree programs, visit francis.edu/biology/

What's New in the Biology Department?

- Three SFU Biology students received Beta Beta Beta Research Foundation research grants to help fund their undergraduate research projects. **Annie Beliles** was funded for her project "Cold Tolerance Abilities of *Sympetrum vicinum*," **Abigail Blair** for her research project "Effects of Ocean Acidification on the east coast Quahog;" and **Paige Mundy** for her research project "Methylation of HSP70 in response to Acidity."
- At the School of Science Awards Ceremony, Senior **Zack Rozansky** received the Outstanding Biology Senior Award, the Biology Senior Service Award, the Marine Biology Award, and the Outstanding Environmental Sciences Student Award. Junior **Paige Mundy** received the Wayne Takacs Award for Excellence in Physiology.
- **Dr. Gail Drus** was an invited speaker at the 2014 Tamarisk Research Conference: Riparian Restoration in the Western US, Colorado Mesa University, Grand Junction, Colorado.
- The department welcomes SFU Biology alumnus **Amanda Martino** ('07) as Visiting Assistant Professor, starting Fall 2014. Ms. Martino will complete her Ph.D. at Pennsylvania State University this summer, and studies seafloor microbiological communities.

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Alumni: do you have news to share? New job? Attending graduate school?
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Special Topics Courses Expand Learning Opportunities

Nine students had the opportunity to focus on Cancer Biology in this spring's Special Topic Course. Dr. Sue Reimer led discussions and readings about the molecular biology of cancer. Students read scientific papers, posed questions, and discussed potential therapies. Each student presented a topic of his or her choice; these ranged from designing inhibitors of cell signaling to the role of exercise and nutrition in cancer prevention.

"The best part was the fact that the class was more of a forum than a typical classroom," explained recent graduate Chris DeLaney. "There were lecture days with lots of note taking, but the majority of the class was an open discussion. No idea was too outlandish and no question was too silly."

These discussions often focused on the most recent developments in the field, with an emphasis on what the future holds. "I particularly enjoyed brain storm-

ing about possible ways to approach curing or managing cancer in the future," said graduate Emily Geramita.

Special Topics courses allow students to enhance their education by in-depth study not commonly available within their required list of courses. Students are motivated by a desire to learn more about a particular niche within biology, and are given free reign to explore advanced topics that are currently being investigated by experts in the field.

These courses are routinely offered by faculty in the Biology Department at Saint Francis University. Last year, Dr. Irene Wolf taught a course on Endocrine Pathologies. This fall, Dr. Justin Merry will teach a course called The Biology of Human Health to SFU study abroad students in France. Furthermore, next spring, Dr. Gail Drus will be teaching an advanced plant science course.

Graduate Profile: Amanda Johnson

May 2014 graduate Amanda Johnson, from Tyrone, PA, came to Saint Francis University because she wanted a more intimate experience than a large school could provide. Furthermore, she wanted to obtain an excellent premedical education, while still having the opportunity to pursue other subjects that she loves: art, political science, theology, and politics. It's that diverse, intimate educational experience that defined her time at SFU.

"The most valuable part about being a biology major at SFU is the faculty support network that I've developed," said Johnson. "I've heard about the 'perfect science student' who never asks questions, never fails at anything, and is always confident about what they're doing 100 percent of the time, but that's not me. I have lots of questions, and sometimes I reach an educational impasse.

Here, if I have a question, I just ask—and everyone has been so willing to help me."

Johnson was involved research in the Biology Department. She worked with Dr. Lane Loya on her Honor's Thesis, "Hostile environment: the effect of cross-system subsidies on riparian arthropod communities." Her work demonstrated that stream pollution can have a surprising impact on adjacent terrestrial ecosystems.

While Amanda has long known that she wanted to work in healthcare, it wasn't until recently that she decided to pursue podiatry. While volunteering at her hometown hospital, Amanda met a podiatrist who changed her views about the field. "As a podiatrist, I will have the ability to work in an orthopedics clinic, my own practice, or a big hospital system. I'll



Amanda Johnson (left) on the Field Biology trip to the Galapagos Islands, Fall 2013. Also shown: Abigail Blair (center) and Lindsey Wolfe (right).

have a lot more autonomy in the healthcare field, and I'll be able to directly impact my patients' care more immediately," she said. Amanda will begin her first year at the Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine this fall.