



## Letter from the Chair



Dear Alumni and Friends,

As we near the holiday season and the end of 2024, I send you our best wishes from the Department of Biology. I hope you are able to use this time to rest and spend quality time with your family and friends.

We'll be trying our best to do the same after another semester of hard work and accomplishments by our students, faculty, and staff. As we continue to share stories about our work here, I hope you are motivated to take some time to learn about some of these people and their successes in research and in the classroom. They continue to demonstrate why getting a degree in biology from UK is a foundational step in the development of a career and rewarding life. I am sure that most, if not all, of you will agree with me.

I close with a heads-up for an upcoming announcement in 2025 from Alumni Board Chair Amy Wilson about a matching campaign drive based on generous donations from members of our Alumni Board. We are beyond fortunate to have such kind and supportive alumni, within and outside of the Board, and I thank you all for being important members of the UK Biology community.

Happy Holidays and best wishes in 2025!

Sincerely,

Dave Weisrock

Professor and Chair



Alumni



### **Biology Alumni Board Meets with Students**

During our Annual UK Biology Alumni Weekend (Friday, October 25, and Saturday, October 26), our board met with undergraduate and graduate

students to discuss career experiences and opportunities!

**Drinks and food with fellow Alumni and members of the Department at the historic Thomas Hunt Morgan House in downtown Lexington.**



Check out the photo gallery [here!](#)

Annual Thomas Hunt Morgan Lecture Series



### Pioneer in genetics research to deliver UK's Thomas Hunt Morgan Lectures

Dr. Joseph Takahashi is a pioneer in applying forward genetics and positional cloning in mice to uncover genes related to neurobiology and behavior. His identification of the clock genes in both mice and humans contributed to the understanding of a conserved circadian clock mechanism in animals.

[Read More](#)

### Undergraduate Achievements



Undergraduate students, **Julianne Sharpe**, biology and Lewis Honors College junior, and **Nikitha Dharanipragada**, neuroscience and Lewis Honors College senior,

Undergraduate student, **Elizabeth Elliott**, named as a Beckman Scholar!

were winners at the **2024 5-Minute Fast Track Competition!**

Click [here](#) to read more!

To learn more about this competition and see their presentations, click [here](#)!

## Undergraduate Spotlights



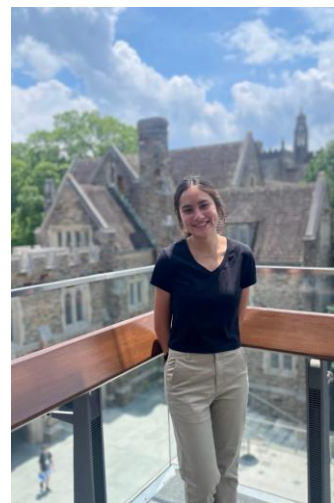
Meet **Hannah Allen**, a biology major with a minor in chemistry, from Greenup, KY.

Hannah received the Ribble Scholar Award, is the Co-Chair of [Aperture](#)'s Publication and Production Committee, is a [research ambassador](#),



Meet **Elleena Depenbrock**, a biology major with a minor in chemistry, from Hebron, KY.

Elleena has been on the [Dean's List](#) every year, been a Residential Advisor for the past three semesters, earned the [Emerging Leader Award](#),



Meet **Jaesylin Stephens**, a biology major with minors in neuroscience and microbiology, from Louisville, KY.

Jaesylin recently received the Biology Summer NSF REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) with [Duke's PreMiEr Research](#)

and received the [Kentucky Alumni Association Scholarship](#).

To learn more about Hannah, click [here](#)!

and was awarded a [Gertrude Ribble Undergraduate Scholarship](#) for the past two semesters of research in Dr. Nicholas McLetchie's lab.

To learn more about Elleena, click [here](#)!

[Center](#) and the [Gertrude Ribble Undergraduate Scholarship](#).

To learn more about Jaesylin, click [here](#)!



#### Graduate Student Achievements & Spotlights



Meet [Cleverson Lima](#), a biology graduate student in Dr. Jeremiah Smith's lab.

Clev recently attended the [International Congress of Entomology \(ICE\)](#) in Kyoto, Japan, and his talk was



Meet [Anjana Subramoniam](#), a biology graduate student in Dr. Bruce O'Hara's lab.

Anjana recently received the [University of Kentucky Graduate Presidential](#)

selected for one of the [Young Scientist Presentation Awards!](#)

To learn more about Clev, click [here!](#)

[Fellowship.](#) This fellowship is only awarded to one graduate student a year who demonstrates academic merit and research capabilities in their field of study.

To learn more about Anjana, click [here!](#)

## Faculty Achievements & Spotlights



Meet [Dr. Madhu Srinivasan](#), a senior lecturer in our department.

If Dr. Srinivasan could share one piece of advice with students, it would be: "*No matter how daunting a task may seem, as long as you start it early enough and work step-by-step in a systematic and careful manner, you will complete it successfully*".

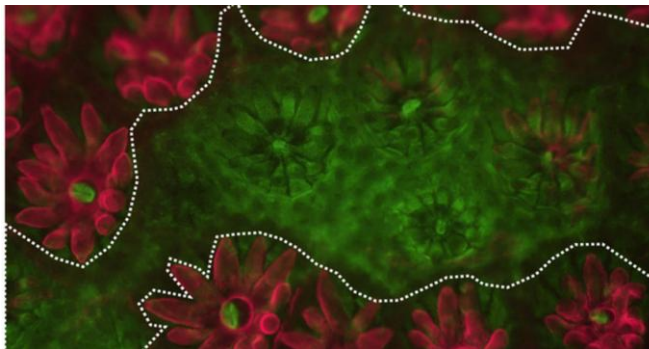
To learn more about Dr. Srinivasan, click [here!](#)



### **UK Researcher Part of Team Awarded \$12.5 Million NSF Grant to Study Phenomenon Affecting Agriculture, Cancer**

Eighteen scientists have received a combined \$12.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation to establish the Polyploidy Integration and Innovation Institute.

[Read More](#)



### **UK Biologist Part of Team Researching Coral Regeneration**

A new research project is investigating how coral reefs heal from damage and withstand environmental threats, particularly those associated with climate



change. A three-year, \$1.3 million grant from the W. M. Keck Foundation is funding the multicampus collaboration, with UC Santa Barbara (UCSB) leading the effort.

[Read More](#)



### **A Tribute to Professor James L. Krupa: Weaving the Tapestry of Life's Story**

For 33 years, [Professor Jim Krupa](#) has been much more than an educator — he has been a master storyteller, weaving the grand narrative of life's evolution for undergraduate students. As he steps away from the lectern, we

celebrate a career that has illuminated the complex web of evolution, sparked curiosity, and inspired wonder in the hearts of young learners.

[Read More](#)



Meet [Dr. Jennifer Osterhage](#) an associate professor in our department and director of the [S-STEM Program](#).

Dr. Osterhage recently took on an additional role as Director of the Office of [Transdisciplinary Educational Approaches to Advance Kentucky \(TEK\)](#). Congratulations, Dr. Osterhage!

## **UK Study Explores How Macrophages Regulate Regenerative Healing in Spiny Mice**



A team of researchers at the University of Kentucky and Cincinnati Children's Hospital is delving deeper into the science behind how spiny mice can regenerate lost tissue and using what they learn to trigger regeneration in other types of mice — advances which one day may be translated into humans.

[Read More](#)

**Our faculty care about our students!**



[Dr. Robin Cooper](#) at the Research + Creative Expo



Video credit: A student in the Gatton Student Center



Give Now to the Biology Development Fund



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