As Biocore navigates through this period of transition, let us take a moment to reflect and honor Biocore’s legacy of innovation, and how it has continued to serve as a foundation for future growth and learning.
Transitions In & Out of the Classroom
As students learn and grow, they transition to mentors, advisors, and leaders

From DEI Interns -> Researchers
During Summer 2021, Biocore took a step forward with the establishment of the DEI internship program. The original three interns created a foundation for sustained DEI conversation and contributed to making Biocore a community grounded on principles of inclusion and equity where individuals can achieve a sense of belonging. This year we had four new DEI interns (Isa Butz, Noelle Candler, Mitchell Kraemer, Shreya Sharma), who continued to sustain Biocore’s DEI conversation and integrate DEI more thoroughly into the curriculum. Inspired by the previous DEI interns, they led the Fall 2022 DEI workshop and built upon the concept of “brave spaces” within ourselves and in our classrooms. Interested in applying a research lens to DEI, Isa Butz and Sarah Almutawa, Biocore graduates, are embarking on a year-long research project studying the impacts of imposter phenomenon and sense of belonging in underrepresented Honors students.

From Science Camper -> Biocore Instructor
As an 11th grader in 2007, Danny Parrell was dropped off at Wisconsin Heights Middle School for a week long Summer Science Camp led by Biocore Outreach Ambassadors. By the end of camp, Michelle and Janet suggested that Danny should plan to attend UW Madison and of course, join Biocore. And he did! In addition to joining Biocore, Danny was a BOA co-chair and crew leader for the Biocore Prairie. He also starred in “Biocore The Musical” (YouTube it!).

Upon earning his Microbiology BS (2012), Danny went on to earn a PhD in Microbiology and Molecular Genetics at Michigan State U (2019). Even during his time at MSU, he returned each June to lead Summer Science Camp. Now back at UW, as a postdoc in Biochemistry with Dr. Elizabeth Wright, Dr. Danny Parrell joined the Biocore 381 team to teach genetics in fall 2022.

From Students -> Peer Advisors
Our Biocore Peer Advisors are expanding campus outreach! Together with Diana Tapia Ramon, Staff Advisor to the Peer Advisors, they have interacted with thousands of students from Your UW Days, classroom visits, club organizations, and hosted the yearly Biocore Info Session.

Rooted in their own experience and understanding the value of establishing a sense of community early on, our PA’s created Admitted Students Night and Biocore Open House. This served as an opportunity for incoming Biocore students to get to know their cohort members in a relaxed environment.

From Biocore 181ers -> uTAs
Keeley Kuru, Lucy McGuire, and Avery Peterson were part of our first rendition of Becoming a Scientist: Doing Biology Research offered as a FIG (Freshman Interest Group) in Fall 2019. These three went on to become active members and leaders in our Biocore community. In fall 2022, they returned full circle as uTAs in Becoming a Scientist (now Biocore 181H)!

Keeley reflects on her first experience doing research and shares how it influenced her identity as a scientist as she applies to graduate school.

“I remember feeling unsure and overwhelmed at first. Looking back on our project, it was the stepping stone towards becoming an independent researcher and scientist. To me, a project that concludes with alternative results excites me, and leads to more questions and future studies. That is exactly what this project did for me.”

From a Seed -> Biocore Prairie
In 1997, Biocore students and staff embarked on a long-term project to restore an abandoned agricultural field, which has since become the Biocore Prairie. This year, we are celebrating 25 years of this remarkable effort. Over time, the Prairie has bloomed with over 100 native prairie plant species (some rare & endangered).

Under Seth McGee’s management and leadership, the Prairie has fostered student internships, research and outreach including the Biocore Prairie Bird Observatory, Biocore Bluebird Trail and Purple Martin (PUMA) project. As a focal point and destination within the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, Biocore is privileged to continue our stewardship efforts and to witness the Prairie grow.

Put the Biocore Prairie on your list the next time you visit - no matter the season!
Dear Biocore students, alumni, colleagues, and friends,

I deeply appreciate your well-wishes, generous gifts to support the Biocore Outreach Ambassadors, and kind words of support upon my retirement.

During my 23-year career, I was very fortunate to work with some of the wonderful people who established Biocore’s excellence in establishing student-focused learning environments stressing “how do we know what we know?” When I began teaching in Fall 1999, I tried to channel all that I had learned from Dr. Marion Meyer, one of the first instructors for the Biocore lab beginning in 1971. She taught me the beauty of helping students learn through mentoring their execution of authentic research projects. My immediate predecessor Dr. Marcie Myers left me brilliant resources and encouragement. I continued to learn from Dr. Ann Burgess and Curt Caslavka until their retirement in 2002.

For the last 20 years, I was blessed to share the classroom with, and continue to learn from Seth McGee, Dr. Jeff Hardin, numerous faculty from across campus, many talented TAs and post-docs, and my dear friend and teaching partner Dr. Janet Batzli. Carol Borcherding saved me countless times with her administrative support and warm smile. Most recently, I had the joy of mentoring teaching post-doc and former Biocore student Dr. Anna Kowalkowski, the current resident of 307 Noland Hall.

Perhaps most of all, I am grateful to the ~2,000 or so Biocore students that I was privileged to teach. My students taught me invaluable life lessons (and a whole lot of biology!). I am so thankful for all of their hard work, energetic science outreach, and outstanding research minds. Remember, each of you is the scientist you know best.

My heart is full of love and gratitude for you all,
Michelle

Dr. Anna Kowalkowski is BACK - as Biocore's newest staff member

Dr. Kowalkowski completed her PhD in 2020 at UW Madison studying intestinal physiology and since then has taught in all Biocore labs, 181, and 383 as either a teaching postdoc or a short-term instructor. Anna has a long history with Biocore going back to her undergrad—she completed Biocore as a student in 2001! Anna is the course chair of Biocore 181 and 486 and serving as co-chair of Biocore 384. We are so excited to welcome Anna back to Biocore, now as a permanent staff!

Professor Shelby O'Connor - Biocore's new faculty director

Dr. O'Connor hails from the Dept of Pathology, studies the genetics of HIV/SIV infectious viruses and has been involved in the campus Covid-19 response with SARS CoV2 surveillance as well as Biocore's go-to expert on Covid19 genetics and research. Shelby is no stranger to Biocore. She started teaching in Biocore as a graduate TA and then joined the Biocore 383 faculty instructor team as course chair in 2014.

Hi Biocore Friends!

One thing that is great about Biocore is the stability of our core team, our shared goals, and philosophy on teaching and student learning. Everyone is devoted to making Biocore the best possible version of itself. With that, our faculty and staff stick around for a long time (fun fact- in total, the combined experience of the five core Biocore staff is 100 years!).

Yet change is inevitable, and this past year has been full of change and transitions. It means we must say ‘see you later’ to old friends, while we get to say ‘hello’ to new smiling faces. Those who leave provide a lasting legacy of innovation upon which new Biocore community members can build. This offers ample room to bring creative and alternative ideas to maintain the excellence of our program while growing it in new ways.

I hope everyone in the Biocore community recognizes that these transitions come in all flavors. This past year, Michelle Harris and Amy Moser retired, while Anna Kowalkowski joined our full-time staff and we welcomed Laura Hernandez to the 485 team. Each semester, we see new TAs join our team, move between courses, or graduate from their studies. Biocore students also transition into and out of roles as peer mentors, peer advisors, and undergrad TAs. And this year, Janet Batzli transitioned from Interim Director to Associate Director and handed the full reins over to me. I am hoping to harness Janet’s endless energy and work with our team to help the program grow.

Thank you for a warm welcome into this role as Faculty Director of Biocore.

This ongoing cycle of people traveling through our community is something that I hope we can all celebrate.

This has been an exciting year of teaching and learning in the Biocore program with many transitions, and I look forward to participating in the program’s evolution in 2023!

--Shelby O’Connor

Contact us to connect with students through Alumni networking or Give to Biocore @ biocore.wisc.edu

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CONGRATULATIONS
BIOCORE CLASS OF 2022

In addition to cupcakes, we now have pins AND stoles!
Stoles for Biocore certificate graduates

BIOCORE CERTIFICATE GRADUATES

YASH AGARWAL
ADITYA AILIANI
RYAN ANDERSON
MAKENZIE BECKER
AUTUMN BELL
BENJAMIN BOERIGTER
ELLIOBRAUN
GWYNETH CHANG
XI CHEN
MICHELLE CHUNG
TIMOTHY DAVENPORT
HANNAH DAVIDSON DE VRIES
JULIA REILINGH
CARSON DEPAGTER
MELANIE DEPAMPHILIS
ATHARVA ANKUSH DHAMALE
MIRIAM ENGEL
REBECCA FORMAN
CASSANDRA GAUTHIER
ANNE MARIE GLASSEY
NIKITA GONUGUNTA
ISAAC GRUNOW
RYAN HAGLE
ANDREW HALL
BRENTON HALVORSON
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KAYLYNN IMSANDE
HARIHARAN JAYARAAMAN
CASEY KAELBER
WILLIAM KAMM
AADHISHRE KASAT
NICOLE KEOHE
MARTY KELTY
HAANIA KHAN
SHUKA KONISHI
LAUREN KRESSER
RASHMI KUMAR
LETA LANDUCCI
WILLIAM LANGHOLZ
ALEXANDRA LIETHEN
LUCAS LIN
JESSICA LYSNE
YICHENG MA
STEVEN MANOS
KATHERINE MCDONALD
ELLA MEINHARDT
MYRA MOHAMMAD
COURTNEY MOHS
EVELYN OKAL
ELLIE OLSON
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ZHEYUE PENG
THONG PHAN
HENRY PHAN
MILCAH PULIVELIL
XIN QING
GRACE QIU
MADELYN REILLY
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ALEXANDER STANKO
JACK STEFFEN
CHLOE STEVENS
PENGYING SUN
CLAIRE TURKE
MADELINE VOGEL
WILLIAM VUYK
MARSHALL WALTERS
JAMES WANG
RuoHong Wang
DAVID XIAO
CHRISTY ZHENGYI