RESEARCH EXPERIENCE FOR UNDERGRADUATES

As the summer 2019 Blinks-BEACON-REU Friday Harbor Labs interns gear up to attend their first national science meeting in January at Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology (SICB), it is a good time to reflect on the internship program. For me, it seems as though it only ended last week, but for the students who have moved on to applying to graduate programs and working on their SICB presentations, it probably feels like ages ago.

Future FHL interns will have a tough time living up to the quality of the 2019 cohort (although I wholeheartedly invite them to try). Our diverse group came from all over the country, with a wide range of experience and identities. They brought with them their academic and personal talents, and quickly formed into a boisterous troop of top-notch researchers. With courage and determination they tackled experimental design, fieldwork, programming with R software and presenting their results to the FHL community.

When they weren’t in the lab or the field, they were playing card games in FHL’s dining hall, night-lighting off the dock, or boating and kayaking around the island. They even represented the Labs by marching in the Fourth of July parade downtown, dressed in their best LGBTQ+ Pride and Marine Biology attire.

The interns were sure to never miss the social events organized by REU mentor and UW PhD candidate Mo Turner, including TGIFHL (Friday afternoon refreshments on the dining hall deck) and weekly game nights, where Mo introduced them to the apparently wildly addicting card game “Pounce.”

Leading the way was a group of highly accomplished and diverse research mentors, who are truly the ones responsible for the success of this program. Beyond guiding research, the advisors volunteered their time to run workshops on professional development that included writing, grantsmanship, resume building and research ethics. A big highlight was a two-day “mock interview” workshop organized by mentor and Brown University PhD candidate JJ Lomax, during which the mentors and other FHL researchers interviewed the interns in the style of a typical graduate school interview. Thus, a veil of mystery was partially lifted from the grad school admissions process and the students and FHL researchers really got to know each other and made lasting connections. One of the most powerful moments of the summer was a candid discussion among the grad student mentors and the interns about graduate school, where they discussed everything from student mental health to identifying as an underrepresented minority researcher in academia.

The final symposium was bittersweet as the students showcased their excellent research, marking the end of a great summer. Presentations discussed the mechanics of piranha teeth, ecology of kelp and crab interactions, physiology of eelgrass wasting disease, evolution of flounder skulls and many more fascinating topics. Now that this session has ended, the real work begins as students prepare for their careers as research scientists. The relationships they built and the skills they learned at FHL will be invaluable as they progress through graduate school and beyond.

Support from the National Science Foundation and the Anne Hof Blinks Fellowship endowment ensures that this program will continue to train students to become research scientists, and we look forward to recruiting and welcoming the 2020 cohort of interns.

Image: A few of the summer 2019 interns onboard the R/V Centennial.
Photo: Stacy Farina  
Additional photos on back cover.
THE Wonders of Mud

by Rebecca Varney

Rebecca is a PhD Candidate at the University of Alabama. She’s working toward completing her dissertation on chiton genomics and radula iron mineralization, and will continue to focus on understanding the emergence of novel traits across evolution. Her advisor Kevin Kocot encouraged her to participate in the FHL Marine Invertebrate Zoology course taught by Gustav Pauley and Peter Funch. In September, Rebecca wrote an FHL Tide Bite. We received so much positive feedback that we decided to share this excerpt with our printed newsletter audience. You may read the Tide Bite in its entirety at tinyurl.com/tidebite73.

I wouldn’t have been able to attend the course at FHL if not for the Alan J. Kohn Endowed Fellowship. I had just moved to my PhD program the semester prior, and a cross-country trip was simply not in my budget. I was so grateful for the support that FHL offered to students. I packed too much sampling gear (and not enough socks) and left for Washington.

Anytime I go into the field without him, my advisor Kevin sends me with a “scavenger hunt Post-It” list of organisms to bring back in preservative. On my FHL list, one item read “kinorhynch, clean as you can get it, RNALater.” At this point I hadn’t met most invertebrate phyla so I had no idea what a kinorhynch was. But I had a Post-It!

After a day on the R/V Centennial where the rest of the class exchanged amused glances as Peter Funch and I caressed the Van Veen grabs of mud and filtered them like we were panning for gold, I found a kinorhynch. Peter casually declared, “I don’t recognize this one. If you find more, we should describe the species together. And you should do some genetics on it. Ask Kevin.”

After the class wrapped up, Peter got together with kinorhynch expert Martin Sorensen for microscopy, and I got to extract RNA from one precious microscopic animal. We wrote a paper, and though these things take time to finish, we described a new species. I got to name it! As I reflected on what led me to that point, I thought about how incredible it was that a donor would fund a student’s adventure without ever meeting them, never knowing what might happen. The student support at FHL does that, every summer, for so many students. I reflected on how much my time at the Labs had changed my life. A formative experience. The choice for species name became obvious. This past June, I got to add a note to that kinorhynch drawing in my notebook: “Update 2019Jun19 Echinoderes kohni (Varney 2019),” named for Alan Kohn.


You can help us support future Kohn Fellows by donating to the Alan J. Kohn Endowed Fellowship at giving.uw.edu/kohn.

2020 COURSES

Spring Quarter (March 30 – June 5)

The ZOO-BOT PROGRAM
Students participate in 3 courses, plus optional seminar:
1. Marine Zoology
2. Marine Botany
3. Research in Marine Biology: Form & Function in Fishes
4. (optional) Marine Sciences Seminar

SPRING MARINE STUDIES
Students select 3-5 courses, for a minimum of 12 credits:
1. Marine Mammals of the Salish Sea
2. Science Writing for Diverse Audiences
3. Integrative Oceans
4. Marine Biology
5. Introductory Biology
6. Indigenous History & Environment of the Salish Sea
7. Marine Sciences Seminar

Summer Session A (June 14 – July 17)

• Marine Invertebrate Zoology
• Marine Botany: Diversity & Ecology
• Functional Morphology & Ecology of Marine Fishes
• Marine Animal Bioacoustics

Summer Session B (July 19 – August 21)

• Comparative Invertebrate Embryology
• Marine Conservation Ecology
• Marine Subtidal Ecology
• Biomimetics: Principles of Nature-Inspired Engineering

Blinks – NSF Research Internship Program for Undergraduates (approx. June 15 – Aug 7)

Autumn Quarter (Sept 30 – Dec 11)

RESEARCH APPRENTICESHIPS
• Pelagic Ecosystem Function in the San Juan Archipelago
• Marine Sedimentary Processes

AUTUMN MARINE STUDIES
Students select 3-5 courses, for a minimum of 12 credits:
1. Comparative Anatomy & Physiology of Marine Organisms
2. Science Writing for Diverse Audiences
3. Integrative Oceans
4. Research in Marine Biology
5. Fish Biology
6. Marine Sciences Seminar

Please check for updated listings at fhl.uw.edu/courses/course-descriptions/
We are so grateful to the generous Adopt-a-Student Program sponsors who make it possible for students from near and far to participate in courses at FHL. This program created by the FHL Advancement Board offers critical support to students in both the summer and the fall. Program supporters are offered the possibility to meet their “adopted” student and hear firsthand about their individual student’s FHL experience. Likewise, the students enjoy having the opportunity to express their appreciation to their sponsors and show them their lab and tell them about their research project! This important FHL Program has grown to be the largest single source of student support. We are always looking for new sponsors so please do contact Rachel Anderson (rachelea@uw.edu) if you are willing to participate. Thank you!

Student Comments

I grew up tidepooling in the Pacific Northwest, where I fell in love with marine biology. Support from the Adopt-a-Student program allowed me to take two engaging and immersive courses which gave me a summer that fulfilled my academic and personal aspirations. FHL’s unique courses allowed me to become fully immersed in the local fauna around me and finally put a name and ecological purpose all the animals I knew, and more. In my Birds and Mammals course, I was able to design, execute, analyze, and write up my very own research project for the first time, which was incredibly empowering. That project let see myself as a “real scientist.” To my sponsors, thank you for your support!

Linnea, Marine Birds and Mammals and Invertebrate Zoology 2019

I was extremely fortunate to have been able to take the Ecology of Infectious Marine Diseases course during A term in the summer of 2019. This course and the amazing experience at FHL came into my life at the perfect time and it inspired me and re-invigorated my passion for my own thesis research. I met so many other scientists who inspired me and who I believe I will be able to call my colleagues as we all venture out into the world as scientists. This sincerely life-changing experience would not have been possible without the support of my sponsors through the Adopt-a-Student program at FHL. I am incredibly grateful for their support and I was also grateful for the opportunity to thank them in person. Their sponsorship has helped me grow as a scientist and as a person, and I can not thank them and the program enough.

Grace, Ecology of Infections Marine Diseases 2019

Without the support of my sponsors through the Adopt-a-Student program, I simply would not have been able to afford what I can confidently say was one of the most life-changing summers of my entire life at Friday Harbor Labs. Through the Adopt-a-Student Program support and the top tier research and learning experiences provided by FHL, I feel more equipped than ever to tackle the environmental challenges facing our oceans. I don’t just feel equipped, though. I feel excited and eager to continue the good fight. To have been able to experience the frontlines of that fight with those at FHL this summer was an honor and a privilege, and it would not have been possible without the Adopt-a-Student program. Thank you!

Dave, Coastal Fluid Dynamics 2019
The FHL Young Investigator’s Prize is awarded annually to one or two high school JUNIORS who show exceptional promise in the fields of science and mathematics. The winners receive a paid summer internship working with an FHL mentor.

2019 Young Investigator Prize winner Clarissa Felix worked with Dr. Jim Truman, Dr. Lynn Riddiford and Michelle Herko at Friday Harbor Labs studying the development of crustaceans, in particular the development of the mysid *Archaeomysis grebnitzkii*, a small shrimp-like animal that lives in the sand.

2019 Young Investigator Prize winner Rachel Snow spent countless hours in front of a monitor processing 3D morphological data obtained via micro CT scanner. This work was for a project with Dr. Sebastian Kruppert, a postdoc in Dr. Adam Summers’ lab group. The goal of the project was to analyze the crucial characteristics of body armor in the fish family Agonidae, commonly called poachers.

It was fantastic to have Clarissa and Rachel at FHL. They were highly valued members of their research teams!
The FHL Science Outreach Program (FHL SOP) officially began in 2001 and Jenny Roberts was hired as its director, coordinator and educator. Jenny was the ideal person for the job! She had eight years of experience as a research biologist and had worked with the UW, NOAA and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama. Jenny had also taught high school science at Bothell High School for 12 years. She was thrilled to have the opportunity to create a program of investigative science projects for San Juan Island (SJI) students of all grades (K-12).

David Duggins and Megan Dethier, both FHL research scientists, had unofficially launched the program with the Friday Harbor Elementary School’s aquarium a few years earlier. By 2000, Duggins took the lead in securing funding to expand and staff the program largely through a partnership between FHL, the San Juan Island School District, Spring Street International School and the San Juan Islands Conservation District.

When you ask Jenny about the Science Outreach Program, it doesn’t take much for her to light up. She is proud of her accomplishments, having developed and taught all projects (often with an assistant), reaching students in each grade from kindergarten through high school. She smiles and shares, “kids are natural scientists who love to explore and make their own conclusions.”

The individual projects range from the youngest students developing their observational and questioning skills while learning about marine invertebrates, to 3rd – 8th graders having Diver-for-a-Day experiences, releasing juvenile salmon, conducting watershed and water quality studies, and designing their own experiments. The high school students perform invasive species studies with DNA work. One of Jenny’s favorite comments from a high school student was, “I’m really grateful that I got to take part in this lab. Not only was it very fascinating and elaborate, but we got to use tools that I may never again use in my life. Also, important information about the health of our local species came out of it.”

The FHLSOP provides science experiences that complement and enhance the local schools’ curriculum. Each year Jenny and her team work with approximately 700 students and 24 teachers. She emphasizes how much she values the talented and committed teachers on SJI, and is also grateful to her fantastic FHLSOP assistants, UW volunteer scientists, divers and the dive safety officer. Most recently, Jenny has involved university students as mentor scientists in the 1st, 3rd and 6th grade projects. They support her in the classrooms and in the field, resulting in a fabulous opportunity for the younger and older students alike.

We congratulate Jenny on successfully leading the FHLSOP for 19 years, and for accomplishing her goal of involving the Island’s students in the “process of science!”

None of this would be possible without the generous support from sponsors, donors, and foundations along with the important community partnerships in place. You can help support the FHL Science Outreach Program by donating online at http://tinyurl.com/FHLSOP or by contacting Rachel Anderson at rachelea@uw.edu.
We are saddened to share the news that Dr. Pamela Roe passed away on August 10, 2019. Pam was originally from Texas and came to the University of Washington to seek her Master’s degree (1967), and then her Doctorate (1971) working with Prof. Alan J. Kohn. She focused on the natural history and the feeding and reproductive biology of *Paranemertes peregrina* (the purple ribbonworm), and did most of her fieldwork at FHL. From those treasured days at the Labs, Pam and her fellow grad students forged life-long friendships. She was known for her generous spirit, her tremendous sense of humor, and her thoughtfulness.

After receiving her PhD, Pam was immediately hired to teach at California State University Stanislaus (CSUStan) in Turlock. She absolutely loved her job and devoted all of her time to it, and remained there for 40 years teaching invertebrate zoology, marine biology and general parasitology to a diverse population of students. She was well known for making long trips to the ocean, making it possible for all students to have the kind of field experience that she highly valued.

Pam was recognized both for her teaching and her research. She received many accolades and awards, but the true reward for her was the joy of introducing students to the wonders of the marine world.

Tragically, Pam’s career was cut short by early-onset Alzheimer’s. Upon hearing the news of Pam’s illness, fellow grad student Rita O’Clair brought together the “Friends of Pam” who generously established and funded the Pamela Roe Graduate Student Endowed Fund at Friday Harbor Labs, creating a lasting tribute to Pam. This important fund supports grad students doing course work or research at FHL, with a preference given to students in the fields of marine invertebrate zoology (including embryology and parasitology) or marine biology, with a strong emphasis on natural history or ecology. The fellowship also gives preference to CSUStan students involved in graduate work.

Pam was a beloved friend and highly respected scientist and instructor. We admire that she shared her grand sense of spirit and adventure with so many, and feel extremely fortunate to have spent time with her.
Zander first came to FHL when he applied for an FHL Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship at Friday Harbor Labs in the spring of 2012. He had an interesting background and wanted to come and do research on ctenophores (comb jellies). Leonid Moroz and I were very excited about his application and looked forward to having him spend a quarter with us doing research on the genome of *Pleurobrachia bacheii*, a local ctenophore. Zander followed up on that quarter at FHL with research at the Whitney Lab in Florida and co-authorship with Leonid, myself and many others on an exciting Nature paper on the ctenophore genome and its similarity to the sponge genomes (nature.com/articles/nature13400).

Zander applied to UW Biology in 2012 and was accepted to my lab for graduate school, and I was very pleased to work with him. He was very intelligent and focused, asked insightful questions and cared passionately about the answers. His research was on ascidians (tunicates / sea squirts) and how the genome works within a fertilized egg cell to make specific morphologies. He worked on two closely related species of ascidians that live off the north coast of France: one has tailed tadpole larvae, while the other species has tailless larvae. We are studying the molecular underpinnings of this evolutionary change in larval body plan. Zander had written several chapters of his thesis and was revising them at the time of his death. We are still in the process of revising the manuscripts, but will eventually publish several papers showing that many of the genes in the tailless species are accumulating mutations that disrupt the proteins and are no longer functional, but are still expressed. This is changing the paradigm for how gene networks evolve at a molecular level, coupled with the concomitant change in body plan.

In UW Biology, at FHL and through the E.S. Morse Institute Japan/U.S. Scholarly Exchange program, Zander interacted with a diverse cadre of students and faculty; since his passing I’ve heard from people all over the world about how he touched their lives in a positive way as a scientist, a teacher and a friend. There were themes running through these messages about how kind and generous Zander was with his time and expertise, and that he shared his knowledge with others frequently and without strings attached. He also encouraged students who were wondering whether they could have a career in science to continue down that path.

That first 2012 quarter at the Labs was a fateful spring, as Zander also met Teresa Schaut who was taking a Developmental Biology lab course with me that quarter. She and Zander were soon a couple, lasting for the next six years and looking forward to a lifetime together. My heart goes out to both families for this terrible and unexpected loss. Teresa and her family worked together with Victoria Foe to plant three new garry oak trees on the FHL campus, in memory of Zander and Garry Odell who also passed in 2018. One tree is near the playground, a second tree is near lab 10 and the other is near the Whiteley Center.

We all agree that no one will ever replace Zander, and we greatly miss him. He was a unique person with a big heart and a broad smile who did his best every single day, touched people’s lives in a very beautiful way and made them better for knowing him. All of us at Friday Harbor Labs and the UW Biology Department thank his family and friends for sharing him with us for so many years. His memory will live on in the hearts and minds of those of us that loved him so very much.

We have been pleased that there were very generous donations to establish an Alexander Fodor Graduate Student Endowed Fellowship to support grad students in courses or conducting research at FHL. What an excellent way to remember Zander! You can help bolster that fund at giving.uw.edu/fodor.

Zander participated with the FHL K-12 Science Outreach Program, interacting with students in local schools. Photo: Jenny Roberts.
Whiteley CENTER

Some of the Whiteley Scholars hosted in 2019:

**Barry Ache**, University of Florida. Study of oscillatory mammalian olfactory receptor neurons.

**Hala Annabi**, UW. Writing manuscript on the work experiences of autistic women.

**Marcus Berliant**, Washington University. Writing on the political economy of labor income taxation.


**Tim Fain**, Violinist and Composer. Composing a large scale work for violin and orchestra.


**Ann Ishimaru**, UW. Writing a book: *Building Equitable Collaborations with Families and Communities for Educational Justice*.

**Joel Kingsolver**, Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Research predicting the fitness consequences of climate change for ectotherms: incorporating heat stress and acclimation.

**Barbara Mutsheller**, Artist/ Sculptor. Designed female figure sculpture, emboldened yet unaffected by negative attitudes and social inequality.


**Laura Rogers-Bennett and Cynthia Catton**, UC Davis. Research on white abalone restoration.

**Albert Sheldon**, UW. Completing research and book project: *Complex integration of Multiple Brain Systems in Psychotherapy*.

**Noah Snyder-Mackler**, UW. Grant writing. Focus: understanding high altitude adaptations in gelada monkeys.

**Cynthia Strathmann**, Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, South LA. Working to formulate and articulate approaches to policy development and advocacy related to equitable housing and land use policies.


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- Adopt-A-Student Program Fund
- Comparative Biomechanics Fund
- Anne Hof Blinks Fellowship in Marine Biology
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- Mellon Research Training Faculty Scholarship
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Sarah Younglove
Lydia Zepeda
As I write this it is Fall at FHL, a great time to enjoy (yes, really) the return of rain and to take the time to assess our past year – and plan for the next. We had very busy and successful Spring and Summer quarters, with students here from both UW campus and all over the world. The summer courses, especially, drew an international crowd and one (our biennial Fish Swimming course) had a waiting list. We had 4 courses going at once during the Summer B session, stretching our housing units and teaching spaces to their maximum! At the same time, we hosted 14 students in our NSF-funded Research Experiences for Undergraduates program, with Stacy Farina (an FHL and REU alumna herself) acting as coordinator and social director. As described on the front cover, those students formed a tight cohort and accomplished remarkable science in just 8 weeks onsite. Many will go on to present their results at professional meetings in the next several months.

FHL staff are also thriving. We are in the midst of looking at our organization chart to see how we can best utilize the strengths of our talented staff; my goal is to keep FHL an exciting and welcoming place to be. We recently advertised and interviewed for two new positions. As a result, I am thrilled to share that Bern Holthius has been selected for the position of FHL Operations Manager and Alisa Schoultz has taken on the new role of FHL Business Manager. I congratulate them both! For me, these past few months have been a particularly gratifying time of working with FHL staff, brainstorming alternate solutions and looking for new opportunities.

I am also building on our ties to UW campus units, including to Biology – which is the academic home of most FHL faculty – and to Jim Truman and Lynn Riddiford. We are incredibly excited that Jim and Lynn are generously endowing a new FHL-Biology Chair, making a quantum jump in our number of resident FHL faculty.

Within the College of the Environment, we share the rapidly-growing numbers of students in the Marine Biology major largely with Oceanography and with the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, and are engaged in frequent discussions of how to effectively coordinate our programs. FHL’s courses should ultimately benefit from increased migrations of these students north from Seattle to our island, and we are adapting our curriculum to best take advantage of this change.

This is an exciting time of transition and optimism at FHL. As this newsletter goes to press, the College of the Environment is conducting a search for a new FHL Director for the next 5 years. In the shorter term, I am “fully engaged” in this busy and challenging job, finding it a great way to give back to this institution that has been my professional home for most of my adult life.

Photo at top: burnsboxco/iStock/Thinkstock

Professor Megan Dethier, FHL Interim Director
Summer 2019 FHL REUs

Upper left: Kyra Amacker in the intertidal, with a clingfish stuck to her forehead!

Bottom left: Interns and advisors “night-lighting” off FHL’s docks.
Photos: University of Washington

Above: A group of REUs in costume for FHL’s Invertebrate Ball.

Right: Sorting through a seine haul for fish at Jackson Beach.
Photos: Stacy Farina

To learn more about FHL, please visit our website at fhl.uw.edu. Interested in receiving our monthly Tide Bite e-mail about FHL research? Please sign up on the FHL News page: tinyurl.com/FHLnews.