
Meet Your Departmental Student Advisor!

Lindsey Gaston
Biology

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Hometown: West Bloomfield, MI

Major: Biology

Concentration: Biochemistry & Molecular Biology

Study Abroad: Quito, Ecuador (Environment and Ecology Program)

Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Chocolate Peanut Butter

Best Adjective to Describe You: Smiley

In 10 words or less, why should someone want to be a part of this department?

Active department, unique opportunities and professors that bring material to life.

When did you know you wanted to study this area? What pathway led you to this department?

I was actually much less involved in the sciences in high school because my courses at that level portrayed biology as a pretty static, memorization-heavy field. However, I was interested in medicine, so I figured I should try at least one science course out in college before I dismissed the entire field. I quickly found that science courses at the collegiate level are very dynamic, interactive, and thought-provoking, and pretty much after that first course in the fall of my freshman year, I knew that this was what I wanted to study. Every course after that challenged me to think in ways that I hadn't before, and I found that to be very worthwhile and exciting.

What is the best way to get (and stay) connected to this department?

It was very helpful for me to discover what a resource my professors could be my first year. They hold office hours for a reason, and going to talk to them really helped me think more deeply about classroom topics and feel more connected to them as individuals. Also, attend SI sessions freshman year! They are really helpful tools for helping you connect with classroom material in a new context, and by working through topics in smaller groups, they provide good opportunities to begin connecting with your department peers as well. Also, the Biology offers a lot of fun programs, which let you spend time with department faculty and students in a more laid back environment (and the Biology department always finds ways to feed us at these things, so that's a huge plus).

What would you miss the most if you were no longer a part of this department?

Lab sessions at 8 a.m. Just kidding. But in more seriousness, I would miss the way that even as the largest major on campus, the Biology department has a way of making students feel really connected to our professors and peers. I'd really miss events like Dow-bq, the Dow open, or the mini "petting zoo" with puppies that the faculty provides for us.

What are your career aspirations/next steps after K?

I just applied to medical school, so hopefully I'll be starting that in the fall after graduation. I'm not entirely sure what type of medicine I'd like to pursue (and I hear that even if I did know, I would change my mind hundreds of times more in medical school), but I've found that I'm pretty interested in neurology. After that, my life plans are always changing as to where I want to live (maybe out West somewhere?), what type of career I want to have (research or clinical? large hospital or small practice?, etc.), but I can tell you for certain that I'm definitely going to have a Golden Retriever, so that's a start.

What has been the biggest surprise you have encountered at K?

This may sound incredibly cheesy, but I was actually very surprised to see how much the school really does function as a community. Around campus, everybody seems to know one another and you can count on a pretty wide collection of greetings wherever you go, which is always a huge mood booster. Classmates are also genuinely interested in helping their peers, which I've heard from friends at bigger universities is quite different than the cutthroat competition that they experience. I've also been surprised to see how seamlessly faculty integrate with students in the K college community; professors really don't seem interested in flexing power or anything and are really interested in getting to know their students.

How does your department connect to your other interests and activities?

Since my career aspirations and interests lie pretty heavily in medicine, the Biology and Biochemistry and Molecular Biology departments have been key in giving me a solid academic basis for the subject and connecting me with several opportunities in the field. I'm also a diver for the Kalamazoo College Women's Swimming and Diving Team, and aside from the fact that it seems that about 90% of the swimmers tend to be Biology or Chemistry majors, these departments have let me begin to understand the science of what my body is doing athletically.

What has been your favorite class at K? Why?

I have two: a sophomore seminar titled Rethinking the Mind and my freshman seminar, Crossing Borders: Autism and Other Ways of Knowing. Both classes were really unlike anything I had ever taken before and forced me to think in really unusual, challenging ways. Every reading from Rethinking the Mind seemed to shatter some preconception that I had about the world and I still really regularly bring it up in conversation, and my freshman seminar let me apply a very human component to a more clinical issue. I also really enjoyed how that class got me involved in the community my very first quarter at K.

What is your SIP?

I'm working in a trauma research lab at the University of California San Diego with the Department of Surgery. I'm doing research on traumatic brain injury and investigating whether administration of the hormone ghrelin following mechanical trauma reduces neural cell death by upregulating the mitochondrial uncoupling protein UCP2.
