# BGSA NEWSLETTER MAY 2026

## Inside This Issue


Earth Day Recap.....1
Lounge Grand Opening.....2
Noah and Sage Defense Recap.....3
BGSA Seminar Speaker Recap.....4
Vendor Show Recap.....5,6
Workshop Committee + Sign-up.....7
Astrology.....8
Stay connected.....9


## Upcoming Events

**Silly Science Awards**
**May 13th, 2026**
**2-4 PM SELE 4068**

**BGSA Lounge Grand Opening**
**May 28th, 2026**
**East Campus: SELW 1028**

## Reminders

**Join a BGSA committee!**

**TAs are still on strike! GEO is meeting at 6:30 on Monday, May 10th. Zoom link is in the most recent email from GEO!**

**Reach out to get door access to the BGSA Lounge Lockbox!**

## Our sponsors:

Complete GENOMICS

Neta Scientific

# EARTH DAY RECAP

## A Day Full of Community, Connection, & Nature

Image of BGSA members after the Earth Day event! From left to right: Zach B., Cesar S., Elise R., Samira U., Chloe B., Soraida Q., Tris B., Megan L., Jamie K., Fabiola R., Luisa M., Hasmatbanu B., and Kiersten O.

### Helping Out at the Greenhouse!

The Earth Day celebration was a success, with BGSA members helping Mathew and Elise at the greenhouse set up a shade cover for the seedlings to come this spring!

After helping with the shade cover, we had a journaling session connected with nature in a big city. UIC is extremely privileged to have over an acre of green space available in the heart of the city! Then we ended the day with a walk-through of the greenhouse!

Thank you to Jamie and the Events Committee for putting on a wonderful Earth Day event! If you are interested in volunteering at the greenhouse, visit: greenhouse.bios.uic.edu/volunteer-inquiry/ to sign up!

# LOUNGE GRAND OPENING

## BGSA's Home Away From Home

**We are officially opening the BGSA Lounge on East Campus!** Our goal for this lounge is to create a space where graduate students can unwind after long and exhausting experiments, kick back with friends, watch something on TV, study in a more relaxed environment, or simply spend time away from stress.

The BGSA has been working hard to turn this room into a welcoming "home away from home" for graduate students. We've already started decorating and gathering some essentials, but we still have a wishlist of items that would help make the space even more comfortable and functional for everyone.

If you would like to support the lounge, whether through donations, recommendations, or helping us find more affordable items, please take a look at our wishlist by scanning the QR code!

**Image features our newly mounted TV! We couldn't have gotten this far without the help of Porfirio and Tomasz! Thank you both, always!**

**BGSA Lounge Grand Opening**
**May 28th, 2026**
**East Campus: SELW 1028**

We're still working on making the room accessible to everyone. Unfortunately, the BGSA needs $5000 to get an iCard reader for our room, so the process isn't as seamless as we'd like it to be just yet. We have a lockbox inside SELW 1027 that holds the key to our actual lounge space in SELW 1028. If you would like iCard access to SELW 1027, please reach out to sumar3@uic.edu for further instructions!

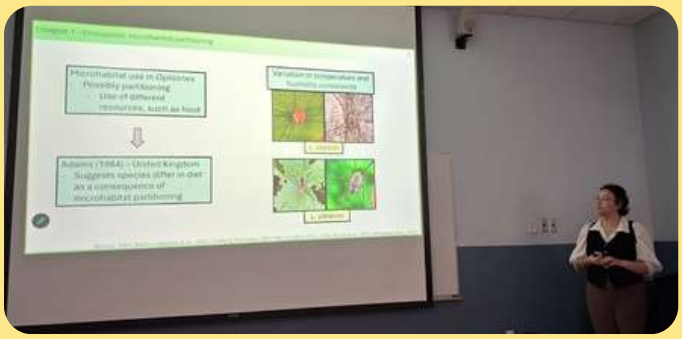
# NOAH AND SAGE DEFEND

## Perfect Defense - Successful Graduation!

**This spring, the BGSA community had the extreme privilege to help celebrate two successful MSc thesis defenses from members of the Ignacio Escalante Lab: Noah Skelly on April 21st, and Sage Delong on May 7th.**

Noah's research examined the morphological and behavioral differences that shape defense strategies in Opiliones, a group of arachnids commonly known as harvestmen.

A few weeks later, Sage successfully defended her thesis, examining how a specific species, Leiobunum Opiliones, uses different defense strategies in response to morphology, habitat use, or environmental stimuli.



It was incredibly exciting and bittersweet to see two amazing BGSA members graduate so close together. The Escalante Lab is clearly a supportive and collaborative environment, and we can't wait to see who Ignacio will bring next to our growing BGSA community.

**Congrats on your incredible accomplishments! We are proud to have celebrated your excellent presentations! We wish you both continued success in Milwaukee, Sage, and Noah in Oregon!**

# BGSA SEMINAR SPEAKER

## Dr. Seth Bordstein - Lessons on Leadership

**On April 26th and 27th, Seth Bordstein visited** from the University of Pennsylvania for a fun time filled with scientific discussion, mentorship, and meaningful conversations across our departments' students and faculty.

Upon arriving in Chicago, the BGSA welcomed Seth with a dinner, during which we enjoyed discussions about mentorship, leadership, academic growth, and interests. One particularly memorable piece of advice he shared was that strong leadership begins with having a good heart. Technical skills, mentorship styles, and leadership abilities can all be developed over time, but genuine compassion and care for others are what form the foundation of meaningful leadership.

During his seminar, Seth shared fascinating insights into holobiont research, microbiomes, and the role microbes may play in shaping evolution and speciation.

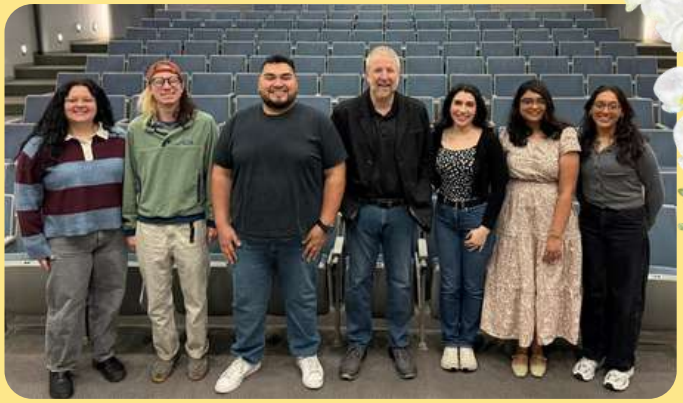


Photo features the BGSA Board and Officers after Dr. Seth's amazing talk! From left to right: Jamie K., Tris B., Cesar S., Dr. Seth B., Samira U., Fariha I., and Jessie T.

Early in his talk, he emphasized the importance of being willing to hold and respecifically communicate scientific opinions that may differ from others in academia. In a field where many people can feel pressure to stay quiet or agree with dominant perspectives, this message resonated strongly with students navigating their own scientific identities and ideas.

The visit was a wonderful reminder that being a scientist is not only about conducting impactful research but also about developing confidence in your ideas, supporting others, and building a thoughtful scientific community along the way.

# VENDOR SHOW RECAP

## BGSA's First Vendor Expo - A Huge Success!

**On May 4th, BGSA's Treasurer Fariha Islam led our very first Vendor Expo,** and it was a huge success! With over 100 attendees and seven participating vendors, including Complete Genomics, Neta Scientific, Keyence, Mirus Bio, USA Scientific, Electron Microscopy Sciences, and Biocytogen, the event raised a little over $4,000 to support future BGSA events and initiatives.

The expo brought together graduate students, faculty, post-docs, undergraduates, and industry representatives for a day full of networking, scientific community building, and learning about new technologies and opportunities in research. Attendees were encouraged to visit vendors, ask questions, and make connections, with a free lunch awarded to participants who visited at least five vendor tables.

One of the most exciting parts of the event was seeing students from across departments connect in one shared space. We even had a few undergraduates involved, including caricaturist Alyson Sanchez, a UIC IDEAS pre-art education major and graphic aide at MeSA, who added a fun and creative touch to the event.

# VENDOR SHOW RECAP

*Thank you for all the support!*

The BGSA also went all out, decorating the space with banners, welcome signs, and event décor to make the expo feel welcoming and memorable. A special shoutout goes to our Events Coordinator, Jamie Kaiser, whose resourcefulness helped us create a professional-looking event while staying within budget.

Photo features Event Coordinator Jamie K. and Faculty Liaison Chloe B. holding down the lunch table for the vendor expo team!

**Most importantly, we are incredibly grateful to everyone who attended, supported, volunteered, or helped spread the word. Seeing so many people come together reminded us of how important spaces like these are for building community within the sciences at UIC.**

**We hope to see you at our future events, especially our next BGSA Vendor Expo this November! And coming up even sooner: the official BGSA Lounge Grand Opening, taking place shortly after Memorial Day.**

# WORKSHOP COMMITTEE

## Help Keep BGSA Active Over the Summer!

### Host a Workshop

Do you have a skill that could benefit your peers? Whether it's coding in R, making beautiful figures in BioRender, speeding up writing, or nailing presentations, the BGSA wants YOU to lead a workshop over the summer!

BGSA will provide the space, handle scheduling and RSVPs, promote your event, and supply snacks & drinks. You'll also have 2-3 volunteers to help you run things smoothly. Bring your idea, and we'll make it happen! Email sumar3@uic.edu for inquiries!

**What you gain:**

- $50 gift card
- Hands-on leadership & presentation experience
- Recognition in BGSA socials/newsletter
- A great line on your CV/Resume
- Certificate of appreciation

### Join the Committee

Come help graduate students share skills, build confidence, and support one another through peer-led workshops. Whether you enjoy organizing events, designing flyers, coordinating speakers, helping with outreach, or brainstorming new workshop ideas, this committee is a great way to get involved and make an impact within the graduate student community.

**Scan the QR code for more info or sign up!**

# ASTROLOGY

## What cell line are you?

| | |
|---|---|
| Aries | PC12 |
| Taurus | HEK293T |
| Gemini | A549 |
| Cancer | MDA-MB-231 |
| Leo | MCF7 |
| Virgo | HUVEC |
| Libra | H9C2(2-1) |
| Scorpio | CHO |
| Sagittarius | HeLa |
| Capricorn | Jurkat |
| Aquarius | SH-SY5Y |
| Pieces | Vero |

# STAY CONNECTED

## We Love Hearing From You!

**Thank you to Complete Genomics and Neta Scientific for funding the BGSA throughout the next year! We are incredibly thankful to all of our sponsors!**

## Want to get involved with the BGSA?

Sign up for one of our committees where it all happens!

Find your committee here:
https://biosgsa.com/committees/

If you're a graduate student and not a BGSA member yet, don't miss this QR code to sign up!