Mission

The Designated Emphasis in the Biology of Vector-borne Diseases (DEBVBD) is a training program that equips talented graduate students to do ground-breaking research aimed at reducing the prevalence of vector-borne diseases. Many of the world’s most serious pathogens are carried by insects and other invertebrates to humans, other animals, and plants. Vector-borne diseases with great human impact include malaria, dengue, Zika, Lyme and others. Vectored plant diseases include citrus greening, Pierce’s disease, thousand cankers disease, tomato spotted wilt, grape fanleaf and others, producing devastating crop losses or deforestation.

Values

Our group aims to act in solidarity with all underrepresented groups in STEM. We recognize our responsibility to identify and correct institutional biases experienced by our students, staff, and faculty. We recognize the history of disadvantages experienced by underrepresented groups as well as the history of exploitation of such groups in pursuit of vector borne disease research. The path to equality in STEM will require persistence and a commitment to science-based approaches to course-correct effectively. We aim to guide our program toward learning from the complete history of this field and science in general to move toward the elimination of discrimination and maximization of inclusiveness.

Reasons to Join

- Ph.D. Students attain broad training and degree certification in the Biology of Vector Borne Diseases
- Faculty can network with colleagues and mentor talented graduate students from a range of graduate programs
- Our annual Graduate Symposium provides a forum to present and discuss vector biology research, and to interact with group members as well as our featured speakers
- Quarterly social events provide an enjoyable venue for exchange of research ideas; faculty also organize ‘brown bag’ seminars to share research plans and results
- Student travel grants are available to help support travel for conference presentations
- We work with the Pacific Southwest Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases, which also provides networking, seminar and funding opportunities

For more information visit our website at https://debvbd.ucdavis.edu/
Joining the Group

A graduate student in good standing in an affiliated UC Davis graduate program is admitted to the DEBVBD by completing an Application for the Designated Emphasis:

Form (GS323) Available online through Graduate Studies - https://grad.ucdavis.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/files/current-students/gs323-de-app.pdf or via the Chair Dr. Geoffrey Attardo (gmattardo@ucdavis.edu).

The QE committee must include one member, approved by the DEBVBD Chair, to examine the student in general knowledge of the biology of vector-borne diseases.

The dissertation topic will focus on research relevant to vector-borne diseases and the dissertation committee will include at least one DEBVBD faculty member.

DEBVBD students will participate in an annual research symposium with an oral or poster presentation of their research results.

Student Requirements

- Coursework to be completed prior to the Qualifying Exam (QE)
- A single required course
  - ENT/PMI 214 (Changing Patterns of Vector-borne Infections)
  - ENT/PLP/PLB 123 (Plant-Virus-Vector Interactions)
  - MMI 215 (Medical Parasitology)
  - VME 158/258 (Infectious Disease in Ecology and Conservation)
  - ENT 153 (Medical Entomology)
- Two elective courses or seminars, which can be fulfilled by completing the requirements of their PhD degree programs or as approved by the DEBVBD Chair.

Affiliated graduate programs:

Epidemiology
Microbiology
Immunology
Integrative Pathobiology
Epidemiology
Ecology
Plant Pathology
Entomology

Completion of the DEBVBD will be designation as “Ph.D. in X with Emphasis in the Biology of Vector-borne Diseases”, where X is the affiliated graduate program.

Faculty from any Graduate Program may request affiliation by sending Dr. Attardo a statement of interest and experience in graduate training in Biology of Vector-Borne Disease, and a current CV for circulation and voting.

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