Microbiology Department (MIC)

College of Science and Health
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Microbiology is the study of microscopic organisms, their activities, and applications. Although small in size, microorganisms play an enormous role in many areas of society including human health and disease, food, pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, agriculture, and the environment. As a result of the widespread importance and application of microbiology, career opportunities are almost limitless. There are more microbiologists than any other type of biologist and the American Society for Microbiology is the oldest and largest single life science membership organization in the world.

The Department of Microbiology, located in Cowley Hall, supports undergraduate and graduate programs in microbiology. The microbiology major has been in existence since 1984 and the program has been recognized by the University of Wisconsin System as a Center of Excellence since 1988. The program is nationally known for excellence in undergraduate education and emphasizes laboratory competence in microbiology and related disciplines. A microbiology major provides a foundation for the abundant employment opportunities in microbiology and is also excellent preparation for graduate school or professional schools. Microbiology is cited as the major that best prepares pre-med students for the rigors of medical school.

The curriculum is based on the recommendations from the American Society for Microbiology, and is designed to ensure that graduates gain excellent, state-of-the-art experience in microbiology. After completing a core of microbiology courses, students may choose electives that allow them to specialize in specific areas. A large number of electives are available in areas of virology, parasitology, mycology, molecular biology, bioinformatics, food and industrial microbiology, environmental microbiology, plant microbiology, and research. Students may also elect a biomedical, environmental science, or business concentration with slightly different curricula. A particular emphasis of the UW-La Crosse microbiology major is laboratory competence. Faculty have received more than one million dollars in educational grants to ensure that teaching laboratories are equipped with the latest equipment. Microbiology majors receive more laboratory instruction than any other major on campus, which results in exceptionally high employability.

Center of Excellence in Microbiology

The University of Wisconsin System and the Board of Regents have identified the microbiology program at UWL as a Center of Excellence based on the exceptional quality of the undergraduate laboratory science education. The microbiology program has been nationally recognized for the overall quality of the program and prepares its graduates for a diversity of professional opportunities at the baccalaureate level. Since the inception of a major in 1984, more than 95 percent of the microbiology graduates interested in employment have obtained positions in hospitals, clinics, private laboratories, food and fermentation industries, biotechnology companies, pharmaceutical industries, universities, and government agencies.

Microbiology is also an excellent curricular track to prepare students for graduate or professional schools (medical, dental, veterinary, optometry).

The microbiology major is housed within the Department of Microbiology and provides students an extensive curriculum with a strong laboratory emphasis. The Department of Microbiology faculty have obtained over one million dollars in grant funding within the past decade to ensure that students gain experience in the latest state-of-the-art techniques. Students may choose from an extensive list of microbiology electives and tailor their major to meet their career goals. In addition to the microbiology major, the department also offers microbiology majors with concentrations in biomedical, business, and environmental science for students wishing to focus in these areas.

All microbiology majors receive individual counseling throughout their undergraduate years. The faculty have active research programs providing abundant opportunities for undergraduate research. In addition, numerous internships are available with local and regional laboratories for microbiology majors. An active microbiology club affiliated with the American Society for Microbiology enhances the educational experience. For additional information regarding the Center of Excellence in Microbiology, contact the microbiology department chair, Cowley Hall, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, La Crosse, WI 54601 USA.

General education writing emphasis

This department incorporates a significant amount of writing through the required courses instead of identifying particular courses as writing emphasis courses. Students who complete a major in this department will fulfill the general education writing emphasis requirement (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/generaleducation/#generaleducationrequirementstext).

2018-19 Faculty/Staff

The following is the department's faculty and staff as of the publication date of this catalog. This list will not be updated again until the next catalog is published in June.

Professor
Michael Hoffman
William Schwan

Associate Professor
Bonita Bratina
Marc Rott
Bernadette Taylor

Assistant Professor
Xinhui Li
Paul Schweiger
Peter Wilker
Senior Lecturer
Suzanne Anglehart

Lecturer
Marisa Barbknecht
Michael Lazzari (Director Clinical Lab Science)

Clinical Assistant Professor
Kari Johnson

Laboratory Manager I
Pamela Benzing
Anne Mach (Prep Room Supervisor)
Rebecca Polanowski

Instructional Specialist
Jesscia Osborn

Administrative Support
Susan Hall

Majors
• Microbiology - BS (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/microbiology/microbiology-bs)
• Microbiology major: biomedical concentration - BS (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/microbiology/biomedical-bs)
• Microbiology major: business concentration - BS (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/microbiology/business-bs)
• Microbiology major: environmental science concentration - BS (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/microbiology/environmental-science-bs)

Minor
• Microbiology minor (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/microbiology/microbiologyminor)

Honors
• Microbiology honors program (http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/microbiology/honors-program)