

Graduate Degree Program in ECOLOGY

Annual Report 2020-2021



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

GDPE Mission

to provide advanced training in current ecological methods, theories, and applications by drawing together individuals and synthesizing knowledge from a wide variety of traditional disciplinary areas of science

Ecology provides MULTI-DISCIPLINARY understanding of PLANTS, ANIMALS, ECOSYSTEMS and the GLOBE

GDPE is Colorado State University's first and largest interdisciplinary graduate degree program. Formed in 1994 making the 2020-2021 academic year the 27th year. Since then, we have:

- Educated more than 500 graduates
- Supported professional development and research through student grants
- Organized workshops, panels, and invited lectures featuring speakers from around the world





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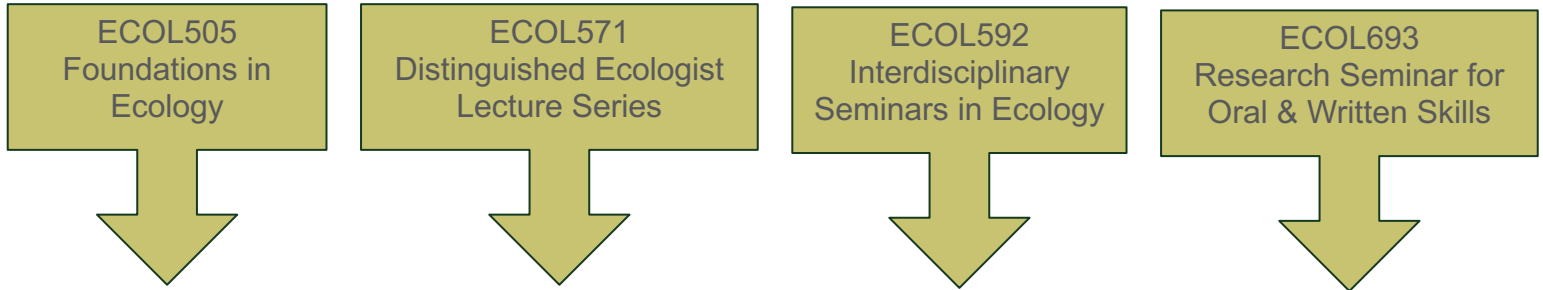
Faculty members

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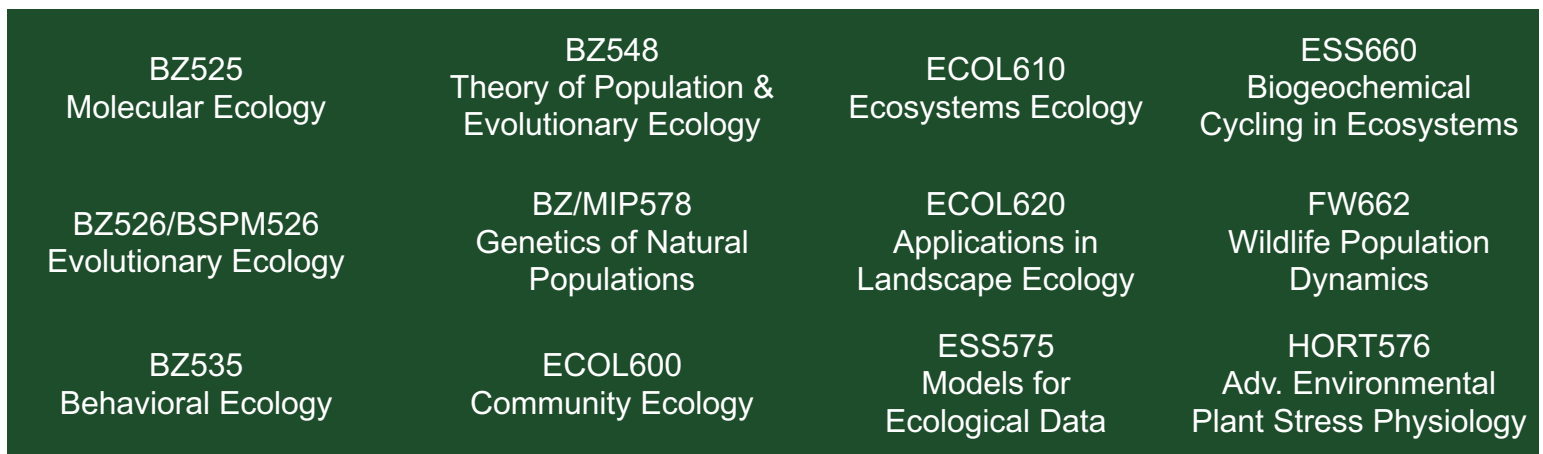
Activities and Events

GDPE Curriculum

Core Course Requirements (MS 6, PhD 8 credits)

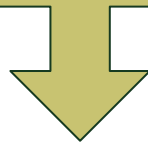


Ecology Fundamentals (6 credits)



Ecology Tools (3)

Over 35 courses with
emphases on topics such as
Statistics, GIS, Modeling.



Electives

University-wide courses to
enhance students' specific
subdiscipline.

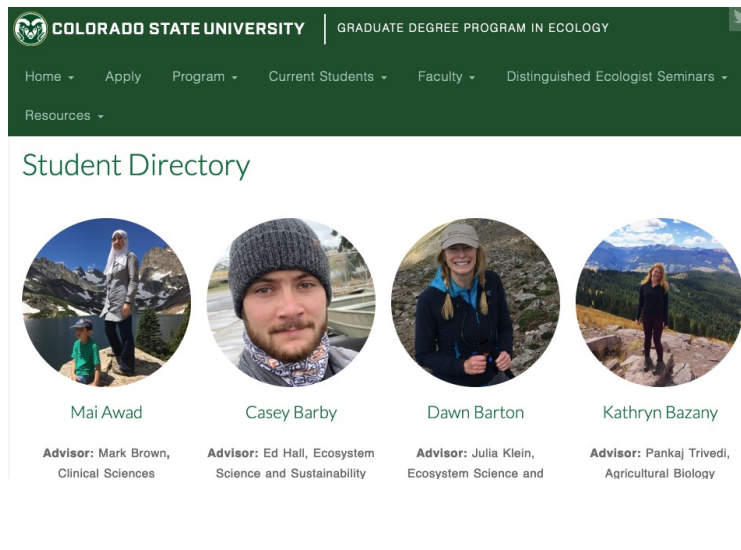


Masters of Science in Ecology – 30 credits

Doctor of Philosophy in Ecology – 72 credits

What's new in 2021-2022

- New Director
- Updated Website



- Student and Alumni Database
- Career Panels
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan
- DEI Action Committee
- Annual Report

Leadership and Staff

Dr. Ruth Hufbauer, Director

Ruth is a Professor in Agricultural Biology at CSU. She is an evolutionary ecologist who started as Director of the Graduate Degree Program in Ecology in 2020. Ruth's goals for the program include supporting outstanding ecological research and training, improving connections across faculty and students, and enhancing diversity. Ruth has a PhD from Cornell University.



Dr. Jennifer Neuwald, Assistant Director

Jennifer is an Assistant Professor in Biology at CSU. She studies evolutionary ecology and conservation and is an integral member of multiple CSU initiatives to enhance pedagogy and DEI. Jennifer has been with GDPE since 2013, where she runs the student grant program, and helps students navigate their degree programs. Jennifer has a PhD from Washington University in St. Louis.



Dr. Alan Knapp, Senior Ecologist

Alan is a University Distinguished Professor in Biology, and a Fellow of the Ecological Society of America. He runs a world-renown research program focused on global change in grassland ecosystems. He is responsible for strategic planning with the Director, and for helping elevate the profile of the program. Alan has a PhD from the University of Wyoming.



Dawn Koschnitzky, Program Coordinator

Dawn is the program's full-time employee. She oversees the logistics of admissions, graduations, the budget and coordinates events. Dawn is a Ram, with a BA in English from CSU as well as a BS in Food, Nutrition and Food Management from University of North Carolina.



Taryn Contento, Science Communications Fellow

Taryn is a GDPE Master's student. She has organized career panels, runs the GDPE social media platforms and she is in charge of general outreach. Taryn also helps other students in the program build and learn science communication skills.



Executive Committee 2020- 2021

Dr. Ruth Hufbauer, Director
Dr. Jennifer Neuwald, Assistant Director
Dr. Alan Knapp, Senior Ecologist

Dr. Larissa Bailey, Warner College of Natural Resources Representative
Dr. Melinda Smith, College of Natural Sciences Representative
Dr. Jane Stewart, College of Agricultural Sciences Representative
Dr. Steve Leisz, College of Liberal Arts Representative

Dr. Meena Balgopal, Member-at-Large
Dr. Francesca Cotrufo, Member-at-Large
Dr. Daniela Cusack, Member-at-Large

Katie Rocci, Student Representative
Dani Lin Hunter, Student Representative

Dr. David Hoover, USDA ARS, Affiliate Scientist Representative

The Executive Committee advises the Director, and makes decisions about speakers, the curriculum, and helps shape the code and strategic plan.

Alumni



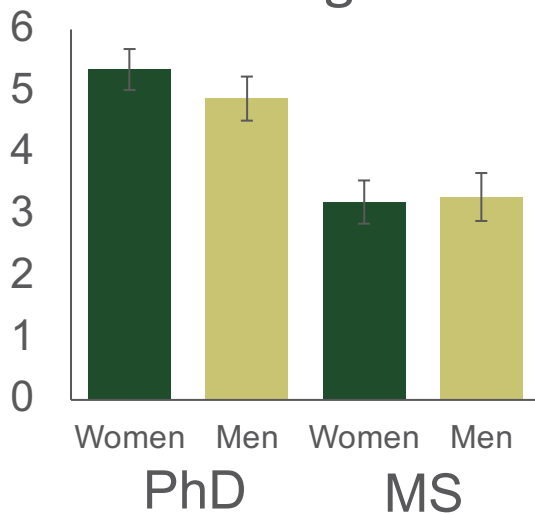
Newly minted Dr. Theresa Baroch with GDPE Director Ruth Hufbauer, Fall 2020

2020-2021
Graduates

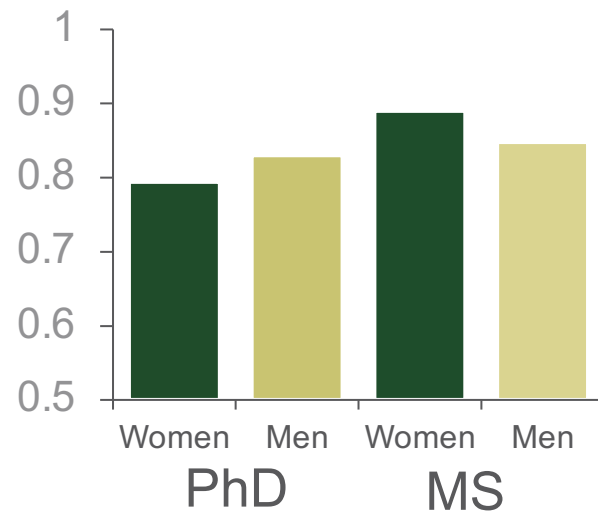
14 PhD

5 MS

Years to graduation

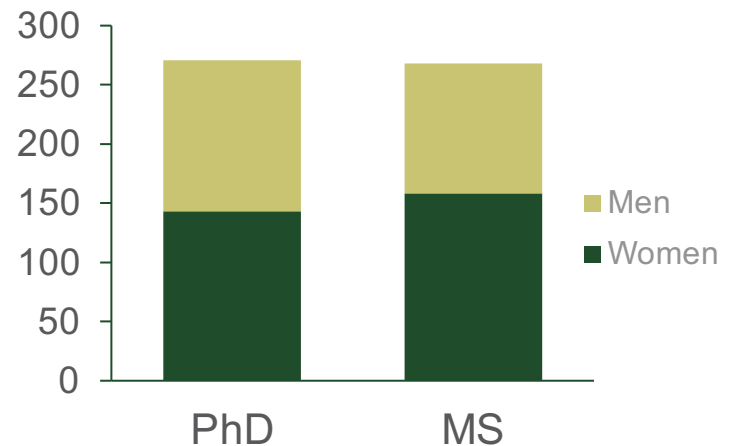


Graduation rates



Comparisons with peer programs show we have competitive statistics. Nonetheless, goals for the program include improving equity in, and rates of, graduation and equity in time to degree.

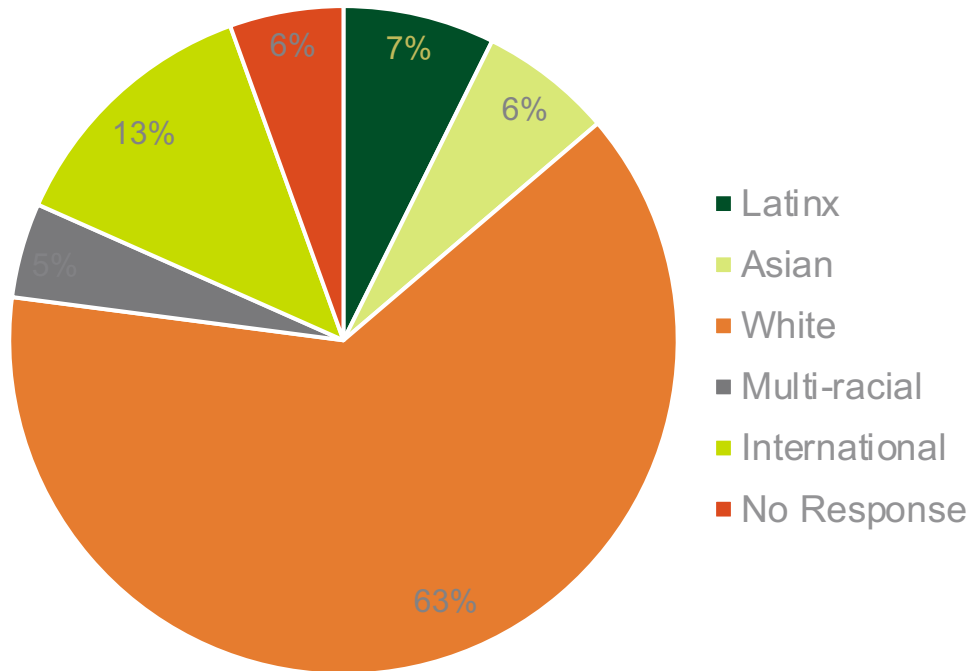
539 Alumni



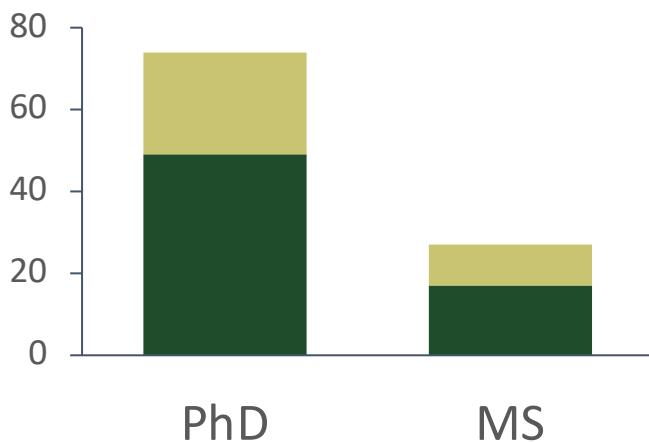
Current Students

Ethnicity and International Status

**Note: Gender and ethnicity identities are reported as available through CSU Institutional Research. GDPE recognizes there are multiple identities that are not represented here, including gender not being binary.*



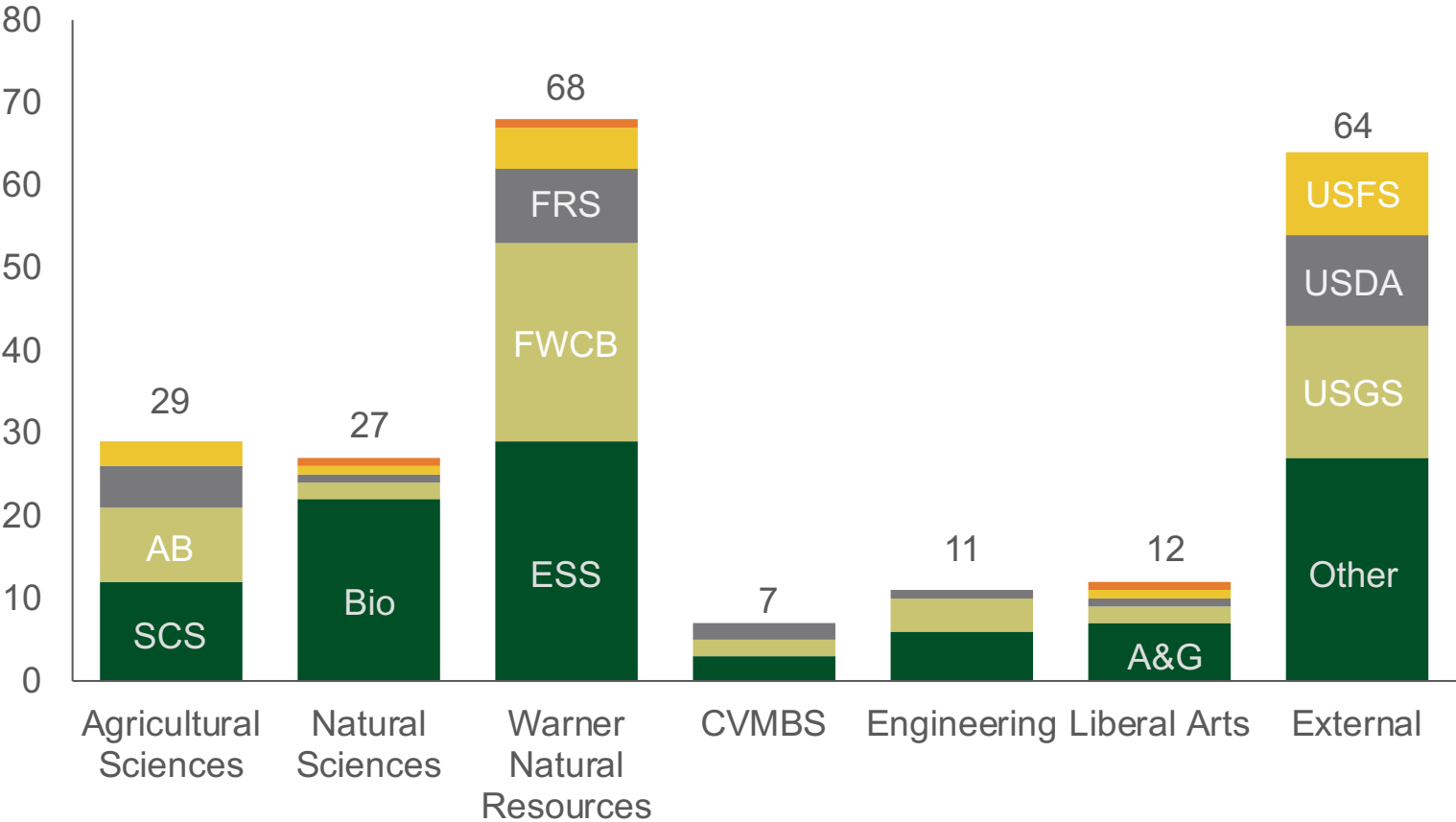
107 Current Students



GDPE has seen a shift in the student population towards PhD students, and towards women over time.

Faculty members

Faculty by College and Department



The GDPE program provides a concrete way for people across six colleges to collaborate through their graduate students, and links CSU faculty members local state and federal organizations, as well as non-profits and businesses in the region and beyond.

Activities and Events

2020-2021

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan Created

- Directors of programs at other institutions consulted
- Drafting committee charged
 - 4 faculty members, 4 graduate student
- Draft reviewed by Executive Committee, and GDPE graduate students and faculty, and by VP for Diversity

Mentor-Mentee Exercise Initiated

- Aligning faculty member and graduate student expectations during the first semester

Career Panels Held Fall and Spring

- Alumni from GPDE at academic institutions, non-profits and government agencies
- Concrete examples and advice from former to current students on how to develop their careers
- *Photos below feature the Fall 2020 panelists*



Dr. Helen Sofaer



Mikko Jimenez



Dr. Dave Martin



Dr. Shauna Burnsilver



Jill Oropeza



Dr. Kerry Byrne

Distinguished Ecologist Lecture Series

- One GDPE faculty member, one alumnus
- Three external high-profile ecologists



Dr. Francesca Cotrufo
Soil and Crop Sciences, CSU



Dr. David Hoover
USDA ARS



Dr. Rachael Winfree
Rutgers



Dr. Vanessa Ezenwa
University of Georgia



Dr. Jonathan Losos
Washington University

Events

2020-2021

Financial support for our students

- 5 Graduate Assistantships
- \$6200 in recruitment funds
- \$12306 in grant support
- \$1241 in professional development
- \$5875 in COVID relief funding



Community-building lunches – *The Exchange*

- Given pandemic, in lieu of fall and spring meetings
- Groups of 8 or fewer students
- Deliberate mixes of first year and more senior students



Looking ahead



- Welcome large incoming class
 - Continue to socialize mentor-mentee expectations exercise
- Implement DEI plan elements
 - Forge relationships with local institutions
 - Metro State, Pueblo, Mesa State, Fort Lewis
 - Seek funding opportunities
 - Collaborate on training opportunities
- Host career panel
- Provide additional professional development opportunities
- Support outstanding science by students and faculty members



