

Meet the VU Biology Faculty!

Rene LaMontagna – Professor, Department Chair,
rlamontagna@vinu.edu

I grew up in the Chicago area and received my B.S. and M.S. degrees in Exercise Physiology from Northern Illinois University. I teach Anatomy and Physiology courses as well as non-majors biology. I love both travel and sports photography. I take pictures for the local high school sports teams to raise money for local charities. I have traveled to Iceland, Alaska, Canada, the Galapagos Islands, and Africa and hope to keep checking places off my bucket list. This is a picture of me with a Raven named Pico in Iceland. Other than cats, I have 3, birds are my favorite animals.



Dr. Ali Benamar – Assistant Professor abenamar@vinu.edu

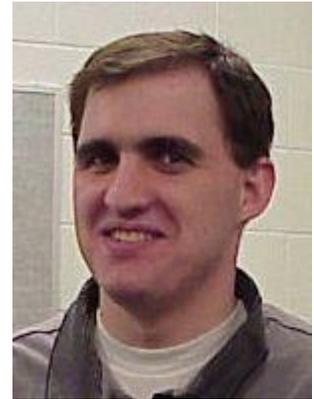


I'm Dr. Ali Benamar, a biology professor teaching anatomy and physiology at Vincennes University. Born and raised in Algeria, I am fluent in French and Arabic. After completing a B.S. in Life Science in Tlemcen, Algeria, I continued on to medical school and obtained a medical degree. I was accepted into the residency program at the university hospital in Tlemcen. Once I completed my residency requirement, I accepted a job as a university physician and worked there until I moved to the United States. During my college years, I was a member of the red cross and organized several blood drives. I was also a member of the Tlemcen University soccer team, and was able to travel around Algeria competing. I'm still a soccer fan today, and love to travel. I have several family members in France, which is one of my favorite vacation spots. I currently reside in Indiana, with my wife and children since 2004.

Andrew Corless – Associate Professor acorless@vinu.edu

I came to Vincennes University in 2008. I have my Associates degree in Math and Physical Sciences from American River College, Bachelors degree in Neuroscience from Brigham Young University, and a Master's degree in Physiology and Neurobiology from the University of Connecticut. I currently serve as the Biology Club advisor at VU and have served as the section chair for the National Association of Biology Teachers BioClub section. You can follow the VU Biology Club's adventures at:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/129575377055129/>.



Dr. Melody Candler-Catt – Associate Professor mcatt@vinu.edu

My name is Melody Candler-Catt. I am a veterinarian who graduated from Vincennes University and Purdue University. I advise Pre-Vet and Pre-Vet Tech majors. I enjoy teaching anatomy and physiology, animal agriculture and animal nutrition during the school year and practicing veterinary medicine during the summer. In my free time, I spend time with my husband, daughter, son, 3 dogs, 1 cat and our big extended family.



Karen Moesner – Professor – VU, Jasper Campus
kmoesner@vinu.edu

I teach A & P I and II and Microbiology for the Health Sciences. I am a medical technologist having worked 42 years in the hospital in healthcare. I am a Certified Coding Specialist (CCS-P). I enjoy gardening, cooking, canning and crafts. I enjoy networking with my healthcare family workers, I have daughter and daughter-in-laws that are speech pathologist, nurse, social worker and nurse practitioner. We collaborate a lot on patients and healthcare issues. I love teaching students the body!



Dr. Jess Robbins – Assistant Professor jrobbins@vinu.edu

I started at VU in 2015. I teach Principles of Biology I & II, and Plant & Animal Biology. I went to VU, University of Southern Indiana, and Indiana State University where I received my PhD in Plant Physiology. I advise Biology majors. Outside of teaching, my second priority is traveling and exploring new languages and cultures. I love learning new things so much, that I've made it my career. I'm also an animal and plant enthusiast, especially puppies, goats, and grapevines.



Lindsay Seals – Assistant Professor lseals@vinu.edu

I started at VU in 2015. I went to the University of Southern Illinois and have degrees in microbiology and molecular biology. I teach microbiology for health science and biology majors. I also get to teach our BIOL 100 course for non-science majors. I advise Molecular & Laboratory Biology majors, Pre-Chiropractic, Pre-Physician Assistant, and Pre-Occupational Therapy majors. My favorite topics are extremophiles and medical microbiology. When I am not teaching I like to read, run, garden, and spend lots of time with my family and our dogs.



Dr. Nicholas Service – Associate Professor, VU Jasper Campus
nservice@vinu.edu

My name is Nicholas Servis. I am currently an Associate Professor of Science at Vincennes University-Jasper Campus. I have been at Vincennes for nine years and have taught Chemistry and Biology courses including BIOL100 (Biology: Connections and Impacts). Besides my teaching, I have conducted research funded by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources on the biological and chemical assessment of the water quality of local lakes. Currently, I am an active member of the American Society for Microbiology, American Medical Technologists and the American Chemical Society. Before my time at Vincennes, I worked in the biotechnology industry for five years and I am also a registered Medical Technologist with several years of experience working in clinical laboratories.



Jeff Dreiman – Laboratory Supervisor jdreiman@vinu.edu

Jeff has been the Lab Supervisor since 2009. He has Bachelor Degrees in Life Science, Chemistry, and Education, all from Indiana State University. Along with his Lab Supervisor roles, he also teaches BIOL 100L.

Lauren Kasinger – Contract Faculty lkasinger@vinu.edu



Lauren graduated from Kentucky Wesleyan College in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry with a minor in Biology. Immediately following graduation, Lauren was hired as a research technologist with the University of Louisville, working exclusively at the Owensboro Cancer Research Program. This program focused on plant-made pharmaceutical research using tobacco plants to produce proteins for the treatment/prevention of cancer, HIV, HPV, cholera, and Zika virus. While working, Lauren obtained her Master of Science degree in Biotechnology from The Johns Hopkins University. Her education and experience have focused her skills in biochemistry and molecular biology. Lauren is a native of Lawrenceville, Illinois and in the fall of 2016 moved back to the area. In spring of 2017, she began teaching several sections of Bio 100 lab. In her spare time Lauren loves spending time with her husband, Patrick, and they both enjoy being close to family and friends in Lawrence County. She enjoys being outside, going jogging, cooking, playing music, and plans to get her pilot's license this summer.

Curt Coffman – Professor, Interim Dean of SEM
ccoffman@vinu.edu

I'm Curt Coffman and I've been teaching at VU since 2005. I have my B.S. in Wildlife Biology and M.S. in Aquatic & Fisheries Biology, both from Ball State University. I advise the Zoology & Marine Biology majors. I teach Plant & Animal Biology, Biology Explorations, and Principles of Ecology & Evolution. In 2015, I was awarded the "Professor Chan Two-Year College Award for Excellence in Teaching Biology" by the National Association of Biology Teachers. I enjoy traveling, hiking, fishing, and taking students to cool places like Olympic, Yellowstone, & Yosemite National Parks.

