

Katherine “Kate” Borchardt
(she/her)



1. **Program of study and year:** I am an EEOB major in the EEB department, 2nd year PhD Student.
2. **Hometown:** Clovis, California
3. **What are your research interests and why did you choose them?**
 - a. I became interested in ecology and how species can indirectly influence other species without direct interactions in an ecosystem during my freshman “introduction to biology” course. Now, I study interaction networks of plant-bee communities in conservation habitat in agroecosystems, trying to integrate agricultural benefits with biodiversity conservation.
4. **What is one thing you think everyone should know about your research project or research interests?**
 - a. The non-native honey bee was brought to North America initially to produce honey, and only after natural habitat declined due to increasing agricultural use did honey bees start to be used for pollination of crops. Native bees used to fully pollinate crops originally.
5. **What advice would you give students applying for research funding opportunities? (if apply)**
 - a. Proposal writing is about making the easiest and most direct case for conducting a research project, and while we as scientists may find the complexities of our research the most interesting part it can confuse the funding committee.
6. **Give a shout-out to a professor, mentor, advisor, or someone at ISU who has helped you?**
 - a. I would like to thank my advisor Amy Toth for encouraging me to study what I find truly interesting and for tirelessly finding new opportunities for me to grow as a scientist.
7. **What extracurricular programs or groups have you been a part of ISU that are foundational to your experience here?**
 - a. I have been involved in the EEB Spring Symposium which promotes graduate student research and is entirely student run. My first year at ISU I suggested we include an art contest and got help from faculty and the Graduate Researchers in Evolutionary Biology and Ecology to create and run it. We just held our second art contest in January. I hope to expand the art contest to invite undergraduate students to participate, and then

attend the graduate symposium and learn more about what graduate school is all about.

8. What is the most valuable experience you have had while studying at ISU?

- a. I work as part of the STRIPS project here at ISU, which is a interdepartmental program studying prairie plant communities planted within row crop fields to improve environmental health and provide native habitat. Working in an interdepartmental project, I've been able to meet and be influenced by so many scientists studying very different topics, allowing me to become well-rounded within the broader area of my research.

9. What do you plan to do after you graduate from ISU?

- a. I still have about three years left, but I am currently hoping to become a faculty member at a research university to encourage and mentor young people to pursue a career in science and research.

10. What motivates you?

- a. I've been given so many opportunities because people believed in my ability to do research and become a scientist: from my original lab manager and PI during undergrad to my current advisors and collaborators. I want to provide that opportunity to other students, because I never thought I could get paid to stand in a field with a butterfly net catching bees all day!

11. Please feel free to share more information and stories about your academic life at ISU!

- a. I am looking forward to visiting with faculty and students in my department during seminars, Friday coffee, and other social events once we are able to be in-person again!

12. If you use social media, please feel free to mention your social media handles as well!

<https://twitter.com/TommiBoshart>

<https://www.instagram.com/polleneaters/>