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Education:

The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX (Aug. 2004 – present)
York College of Pennsylvania, York, PA (AS Biology, May 2004)
Arapahoe Community College, Littleton, CO (2000-2001)
Christian Brothers University, Memphis, TN (BS Mechanical Engineering, Dec. 1990)

Dissertation Research:

“Systematics and Biogeography of the Neotropical Genus *Psiguria* (Cucurbitaceae)”

Advisor:

Robert K. Jansen, Section of Integrative Biology, Blake Centennial Professor

Committee Members:

Larry E. Gilbert, Section of Integrative Biology; Beryl B. Simpson, Plant Resources Center; C. Randall Linder, Section of Integrative Biology; Mona Mehdy, Section of Cell and Molecular Biology

Professional Employment:

Dellinger Horticulture, New Oxford, PA, Greenhouse Manager (June 2001 – July 2004)
Integrated Mechanical Systems, Littleton, CO, Professional Engineer (April 1998 – June 2001)
RNL Design, Denver, CO, Junior Engineer (October 1995 – April 1998)
Ibis Engineering, Arvada, CO, Engineered Sales (February 1994 – October 1995)
Airdusco, Inc., Memphis, TN, Engineered Sales (December 1990 – February 1994)

Teaching and Mentoring Experience:

- Botanical Society of America PlantingScience Master Plant Science Team: I am a Scientist Mentor for this program, which is a learning and research resource for middle and high school classrooms around the country, bringing together students, plant scientists, and teachers from across the nation. Students engage in hands-on plant investigations, working with peers and scientist mentors to build collaborations and to improve their understanding of science. (2008 to present)
- Biology and Math tutor: The University of Texas at Austin, Intercollegiate Athletics (2008-present)
- GK-12 Program: Connections between graduate students and middle school science classrooms bringing current scientific research and interest in science to young students (2007-2008)
- The University of Texas at Austin: Teaching assistant for Plant Systematics & Native Plants (Instructors: Mark Bierner / Katie Hansen) (Fall 2004 - Summer 2007)

Publications:

- Steele, P.R., L.E. Gilbert, Friar, L. and Jansen, R.K. Systematics and Biogeography of the Neotropical Genus *Psiguria* (Cucurbitaceae). *In preparation*.
- Steele, P.R., Guisinger-Bellian, M., Linder, C.R., and Jansen, R.K. 2008. Phylogenetic utility of 141 low-copy nuclear regions in taxa at different taxonomic levels in two distantly related families of rosids. *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*. 48(3):1013-1026.

Awards, Grants, and Fellowships received:

- \$25,000 – University Continuing Fellowship (2008-2009)
- \$12,000 – NSF-Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant (2008)
- \$2,000 – School of Biological Sciences Scholarship (2008)
- \$200 – Plant Biology Memorial Research Award for Organismal Biology (2008)
- \$1,200 – UT Office of Graduate Studies Professional Development Award (2008)
- \$400 – UT Plant Biology Travel Grant (2008)
- \$30,000 – NSF GK-12 Graduate Student Teaching Fellowship (2007-2008)
- \$950 – American Society of Plant Taxonomists Graduate Student Research Grant (2007)
- \$500 – Botanical Society of America, J. S. Karling Graduate Student Research Award (2007)
- \$200 – Plant Biology Bold Teaching Award (2007)
- \$1,425 – UT Office of Graduate Studies Professional Development Award (2007-2008)
- \$1,225 – Stengl Fellowships (2005-2007)
- \$1,000 – Linda Escobar Award (2005)

Presentations:

- 2008 – Botany 2008 – presentation – “Systematics of the Neotropical Genus *Psiguria* (Cucurbitaceae)”
- 2008 – GK-12 Program – “An Integrated Environmental Approach to K-12 Education” presented to the Section of Integrative Biology at UT-Austin
- 2008 – Plant Systematics Seminar at UT-Austin – “Collecting in Bolivia and Perú”
- 2007 – GK-12 Southwest Regional Conference – “Paper Chromatography Lab for Middle School Pre-AP Science Students” – poster
- 2007 – Monthly Plant Genomics and Molecular Biology lunch at UT – presentation – “Identifying Useful Low-copy Nuclear Markers for Examining Phylogenetic Relationships within Angiosperms”
- 2007 – Botany and Plant Biology 2007 annual meeting – presentation – “Identifying Useful Low-copy Nuclear Markers for Examining Phylogenetic Relationships within Angiosperms”
- 2007 – Plant Systematics Seminar at UT-Austin – “Big Adventure – Collecting in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic”
- 2006 – UT Section of Integrative Biology Graduate Student Symposium – “The Search for Low-Copy Nuclear Markers (toward the systematics of *Psiguria*)”
- 2006 – Botany 2006 annual meeting – “Identifying Informative Chloroplast Markers for Examining Phylogenetic Relationships Within *Psiguria* (Cucurbitaceae)” – poster
- 2005 – Plant Systematics Seminar at UT-Austin “Psearching for *Psiguria* – Collecting in Costa Rica”
- 2005 – guest lecture on Meiosis and Mitosis, Plant Pigments, and Introduction to Plant Life Cycles for a Survey of the Plant Kingdom class
- 2004 – Ecological Society of America – presentation – results from an REU research project in Costa Rica entitled "10 Weeks in the Rainforest and Dispersal of *Piper cenocladum*"

Relevant Field Experience:

- Jan. 5, 2008 – Jan. 24, 2008: Plant collecting trip to Bolivia and Perú
- Jan. 3, 2007 – Jan. 14, 2007: Plant collecting trip to Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic
- Jul. 6, 2005 – Jul. 27, 2005: Plant collecting trip to Costa Rica
- Jun. 1, 2003 – Aug. 15, 2003: Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) – La Selva Biological Research Station, Costa Rica
- Dec. 27, 2000 – Jan. 10, 2001: Earthwatch volunteer – Rainforest Caterpillars – La Selva Biological Research Station, Costa Rica

Foreign Language Experience:

- Spanish – Intermediate level of fluency; classes taken:
 - At UT-Austin: SPN327G – Advanced Grammar and Composition I – Spring 2007
 - SPN318 – Spanish Conversation and Composition – Spring 2005 – Grade A
 - At York College of PA: SPN202 – Intermediate Spanish II – Grade A
 - SPN201 – Intermediate Spanish I – Grade A

Curriculum Enrichment Programs:

- GRS-180E – Conference Course in Graduate Studies “Core Principles of Effective Instruction” (Aug. 2007 – May 2008): discussion on teaching styles, student learning styles, engaging students in class discussion, and assessing what the students have learned, lead by University Distinguished Teaching Professor, Dr. Robert A. Duke
- ASPECTS Teaching Certificate of Achievement in “Understanding Your Students” (Fall 2005): a series of workshops designed to teach graduate student instructors to design instruction that takes into account student differences in order to promote individual motivation for learning, accommodate different learning styles, and broaden use of more effective learning strategies. Submission and acceptance of a comprehensive essay describing what was learned and how it was applied, was required for the certificate.

Professional Societies:

- American Society of Plant Taxonomists – 2005 to present
- Botanical Society of America – 2006 to present; BSA Conservation Committee (2008-2010)
- Graduate Women in Science – 2006 to 2008
- Sigma Xi – 2006 to 2008
- Ecological Society of America – 2002-2004
- Society for Economic Botany – 2002-2004
- National Geographic Society – 2002-2006
- Licensed Professional Engineer (PE) in Mechanical Engineering in Colorado – License Number: 33729 (April 2000)
- American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) – (1995-2001); newsletter editor (1999-2000); treasurer (2000-2001); volunteered on Technical Conference committee (1997-2000)
- American Society of Mechanical Engineers – member and student president (1988-1991)

References:

Robert K. Jansen, Ph.D.

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