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The Pec Lab in the Department of Biology at the University of Nebraska at Kearney invites applications for an M.S. position in soil microbial ecology starting either Summer or Fall 2020. The student will investigate the response of the root microbiome to variation in corn root exudates. This research is part of the Center for Root Rhizobiome Innovation (CRRI) (funded by NSF-EPSCoR). The overall aim of this project is to develop an understanding of root metabolism and its influence on interactions with soil microbes and how these interactions are affected by genetic variation and environmental perturbations.

Research in my lab explores questions on the role biological invasions, biotic disturbance, and global change play in shaping the structure and, in turn, the functioning of soil microbial communities. Ongoing projects include how tree loss following biotic disturbance alters root-associated and soil fungal communities, and, in turn, soil biogeochemical processes as well as the role of soil microbes in plant invasions.

Applicants should have a background in plant biology, ecology, soil science or related fields. Experience with any of the following will be an asset, but is not required: ecophysiology, molecular tools, fungal biology.

Application deadline: Open until the position is filled. This work is fully funded for 2 years through a combination of a graduate research and teaching assistantship. Interested candidates should email a copy of their unofficial transcripts, curriculum vitae, a letter describing their research experience and interests, GRE scores (if available), and the name and contact information of three references to Gregory Pec (pecg@unk.edu).

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