SCOTT WENTZ, and JEREMY KEENE, Dept of Science and Mathematics, Glenville State College, Glenville, WV, 26351, Towards a Revision of Diastema Within Central America.

Diastema is a genus of flowering plants within the subtribe Gloxiniinae (Gesneriaceae). Some key characteristics of *Diastema* include a racemose flowering axis consisting of solitary flowers in the axils of bracts on the stems with condensed internodes, nectary consisting of 5 finger-like glands, and a distinctive bi-lobed stigma. Interestingly, there are currently only twenty described species and *Diastema* has not been the focus of adequate research until now. I have collected a sufficient sample size of morphological and molecular data from both known and unknown species. Any new potential new species are compared to the appropriate type specimens to determine circumscription. Moreover, morphological studies focus on taxonomically useful vegetative and reproductive characters with special emphasis given to trichome structure and fruit shape. Molecular studies are focused on nuclear and chloroplast genes to ascertain if any hybridization has occured. Several samples of DNA are now ready to be sequenced for a more comprehensive understanding of the genus. The outcomes of this research will provide a baseline for conservation and governmental agencies to work from to protect the habitat where these species exist and to better understand the biodiversity in their area. My research is used toward a more comprehensive study of the subtribe and genus.