

July 29, 2024

Department of Plant Science
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Subject: 40th Plant Science Graduate Student Symposium (PSGSS)

Dear members of the Department of Plant Science,

I am pleased to announce that the first official meeting of the **40th Plant Science Graduate Student Symposium (PSGSS) Organizing Committee** occurred on July 25th.

The PSGSS is an annual two-day symposium that aims to bring graduate students together from border universities and expose them to new and ongoing plant science research initiatives. The agriculture and agri-food sector is vital to the Canadian economy – generating \$150.0 billion of the nation's GDP and employing 2.3 million people.¹ Indeed, the sector is paramount to the world at large, though it faces ample challenges. This symposium intends to highlight research and advancements in the sector via the following disciplines:

- Agronomy
- Plant Genomics
- Molecular Biology
- Plant Breeding
- Plant Pathology
- Plant Physiology
- Weed Science
- Weed Ecology

I am certain that the graduate students in our department will play a large role in this symposium, as made evident through many research presentations at the recent Carman Field Day. The Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences received \$102 million in external research funding from 2016 to 2021,² \$16.9 million alone in the most recent fiscal year,³ which is indicative of the importance of the research conducted by the faculty's departments.

Additionally, the symposium provides an ideal environment for professional development of scientific knowledge and communication skills, through presentations and networking.

As in years past, the symposium is made possible through collaboration between the University of Manitoba, University of Saskatchewan and North Dakota State University. The symposium venue has rotated between these academic institutions from year to year.

¹ <https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/sector/overview>

² <https://umanitoba.ca/agricultural-food-sciences/sites/agricultural-food-sciences/files/2023-04/FAFS-Strategic-Research-Plan-2022-2027.pdf>

³ <https://umanitoba.ca/finance/sites/finance/files/2024-07/2024-um-annual-financial-report.pdf>

I am pleased to announce that the University of Manitoba will be hosting the upcoming 40th PSGSS in March, 2025.

If you are interested in joining the 40th PSGSS Organizing Committee to assist and receive updates, please indicate your interest using the link below:

<https://forms.gle/pqDQbKX8BMSggpSQA>

I am humbled to have been appointed as the Organizing Committee Chair and to have received the trust of my peers in this capacity.

Should you have any questions or concerns relating to the symposium planning, please contact me at lukesm@myumanitoba.ca. Openness and transparency are values I intend to keep at the forefront of the planning process.

Together, I am confident that the 40th PSGSS will be a success for all parties involved.

Best regards,



Milan Lukes

Organizing Committee Chair, 40th PSGSS

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