1. Message from Dept. Head

To: Plant Biology Faculty
From: Pete Snustad, Interim Head
Re: Plant Growth Chambers in Bio Sci

The Building Systems Automation Center (BSAC) of Facilities Management currently has only one name on file for notifications when Bio Sci growth chamber alarms go off on weekends or evenings. Thus, Dr. Lynn Hartwick gets called no matter which growth chamber malfunctions. We need to compile a list of the growth chambers in use in Bio Sci and a list of the individuals using these chambers who should be notified if the chambers overheat or otherwise malfunction. We need to provide this information to BSAC so that they can notify the proper researchers in order to avoid the loss of valuable research materials.

Please provide Lori Nicol (l-nico@umn.edu) with a list (room numbers) of the growth chambers being used by your lab personnel and the phone number(s) of individuals who should be notified when a chamber malfunctions and the alarm goes off. We need to get this done reasonably soon to get Lynn off the hook for the entire building.

Please provide this information to Lori by August 15 (two weeks), at which time Lori and I will check the list against the growth chambers in use in the building.

Thank you!
**Congratulations to Dr. Summer Silvieus and Dr. Divya Chandran for defending and earning their PhD degree.**

Summer Silvieus held her Defense Seminar on July 19th: “Species limits, host specificity, and co-diversification of fig wasps associated with *Ficus* subgenus *Sycomorus*.” In August, Summer will be moving to Grand Rapids, Michigan. She has accepted a tenure-track position teaching plant biology, plant taxonomy, and eventually a plant-interactions course at Aquinas College. Advisor: Dr. George Weiblen

Divya Chandran held her Defense Seminar on July 25th: “Physiological and genomic approaches to study aluminum toxicity in the model legume *Medicago Truncatula.*” Advisor: Dr. Deborah Samac

**TEACHING ASSISTANTS FOR PBIO COURSES**

PBS Grad Students that received a teaching assistant contract must sign and return it to Gail Kalli in room 256 Bio Sci as soon as possible.

**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

**Bernard and Jean Phinney Graduate Fellowship in Plant Molecular Biology**

The Bernard and Jean Phinney Graduate Fellowship in Plant Molecular Biology in the Department of Plant Biology has been established to honor the many contributions of Dr. Phinney. He received his B.A degree (1940) and Ph.D. (1946) under the supervision of Professor E.C. Abbe at the University of Minnesota. During his long career at the University of California at Los Angeles, he became established as a scientific leader in the study of plant hormones, as an educator and a forceful advocate for plant biological research.

Award:

The fellowship will be awarded for the spring semester of 2007. The fellowship award will include a stipend of $10,500 for the semester, as well as tuition and fringe benefits. One award will be made.

Eligibility and Selection:

Students who are currently pursuing Ph.D. research in any relevant graduate program with a faculty mentor in the Plant Biology Department, and who have completed at least one year of graduate study at the University of Minnesota, may apply. Students working with faculty who have full or joint appointments in Plant Biology are eligible to apply. Applicants employing molecular approaches to study plant biology will be selected based on evidence of their
potential to contribute to future scholarship in the discipline. Members of the Plant Biology department will conduct the review of applicants and selection of the recipient. The strength of the applicants’ overall academic record and experiences, the timeliness of progress towards the degree, the merit of the research plan and the clarity of its presentation and the strength of the letters of The selection committee will consider recommendation.

Application Procedure:

Applicants should submit the following information:

- a biosketch (curriculum vitae) up to two pages in length, including a brief statement of career objectives
- a title and description of the research plan, not to exceed two pages in length
- a copy of the University of Minnesota Graduate Transcript (an unofficial copy is acceptable)

The applicant should also arrange for two letters of recommendation, one of which is from the major advisor, both letters should be sent to the PBio office.

Those intending to submit an application should notify Anne Caton (a-cato@.umn.edu) by August 11, 2006. All materials should be submitted by August 25, 2006, to Anne Caton: Department of Plant Biology, Room 250 BioSci Center.

Plant Biological Sciences Graduate Program Orientation

The Plant Biological Sciences Graduate Program Orientation will be held August 16th through the 21st at the Lake Itasca Biological Research Station.

Fall 2006 incoming Plant Biological Sciences Graduate Program Students

Nine students have accepted our offer of admission and will be starting in Fall 2006. Below is a short bio of each of them. All PhD students entering the program on PBS funds will be required to do two rotations this fall. These students may be contacting you in the next month or so to set up a rotation with you for fall semester. Also, should you be interested in having one of these students rotate with you, please contact them directly.

Carrie Eberle received her undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, majoring in Biology and Horticulture. In her last year at Madison she worked in Dr. Jiwan Palta’s lab on natural variation in the shoot growth response of Arabidopsis thaliana to the calcium concentration in the root zone. Her research interests include breeding and genetics of ornamental plants.

Email: eber21@hotmail.com
Amy Mueller received an MS in Botany and a BS in Biological Sciences from the University of Wyoming. She is currently an assistant professor at Crown College in Bonifacius, MN where she has taught Biology, Human Anatomy, Zoology, Kinesiology and Physiology. She is currently doing rotations with Cynthia Weinig and Ruth Shaw over the summer.

Nelson Garcia is pursing a Masters degree. He is coming on a Fulbright Scholarship and will be joining Ron Phillips’ lab.

Huang He received his BS in Plant Physiology from the China Agricultural University in 2006. He participated in an undergraduate research-training program with a focus on cacineurin-B like proteins in plants. He is interested in ubiquitin-proteasome pathways and other signaling pathways.
Email: hh_317@msn.com

Xing Liu received a BS in Biotechnology from Beijing Normal University in 2006. Her research project was focused on cloning an α-amylase gene. Her objective is to apply basic theory to practice. For example: by developing plants that can tolerate and accumulate heavy metals to improve contaminated soil.
Email: chinalxing@yahoo.com.cn

Kerrie Sendall received her BS in Biology and MS in Biology from California State University, San Marcos in 2004 and 2006. Her MS research was determining whether specific leaf area and rates of photosynthesis as a function of light and CO2 vary in response to seasonal variations in rainfall and canopy growth light environment.
Email: senda001@csusm.edu

Timothy Whitfeld received his BS in Ag. Economics in 1992 from the University of Wales. He also received a MS in Biological Sciences in 1996 from Eastern Illinois University. Tim is currently working as a Botanist/Ecologist for the MN Department of Natural Resources. He would like to focus his PhD research on areas such as taxonomic research, floristic studies, and plant identification tools. He has worked in a large herbarium at Harvard University and took classes in plant taxonomy. He has previous teaching experience in Botany. Timothy will be joining George Weiblen’s lab.
Email: timwhitfeld@yahoo.com

Heather Whittington received her undergraduate degree in Biology from Marquette University. Her research focused on comparing mRNA levels of a possible flowering gene in maize mop 1 mutants with that of non-mutants using RT-PCR. She is interested in studying the ecological physiology of plants.
Email: hrwhittington@hotmail.com

Qiuxia Wu received her BS degree in Biology Science in 2006 from Wuhan University. She has worked as a research assistant and took part in a research project - Identification of Translocation Signals from Storage Proteins in Rice Endosperm. Quixia has been awarded the MPGI fellowship for the 2006-07 academic year.
Email: wuqx1128@hotmail.com

3. Teaching and Outreach

Teaching Opportunity- General Botany

The Department of Plant Biology seeks a lecturer for BIOL 2022, General Botany, Fall 2006. General Botany (3cr.) attracts a wide variety of students interested in plant biology and covers angiosperm structure and function as well as diversity in the plant kingdom. A current postdoctoral scientist with teaching experience and a desire to gain experience in teaching a larger enrollment, plant biology course, would be ideal for the position. Advanced graduate students with an interest in a teaching oriented career will also be considered.

Responsibilities for the course will be shared with Dr. Georgiana May (EEB and PBIO) who has taught the course previously. Responsibilities include preparing 30-50% of the lectures, assistance in grading exams and supervising graduate TA’s. In-class active learning exercises and extra credit writing by students could also be developed.
For details of appointment and pay level, contact Anne Caton (a-cato@umn.edu) or Lori Nicol (l-nico@umn.edu) in PBIO.

To discuss the position, expectations, and potential for teaching experience, please contact Georgiana May (gmay@umn.edu).

4. Calendar of Events

Faculty Retirement Workshop
August 15th from 2:30-3:30 p.m. at 210 Donhowe

For faculty & professional and administrative staff. Learn details about this retirement savings program, as well as fund options.

Benefits Workshop
August 3rd & 24th from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. at 215 Donhowe

Primarily for new employees. Learn more about your benefit choices, including medical, dental, life, disability, and flexible spending account. Bring your new employee benefits packet.

Farmers Market- Church St.
August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

5. Miscellaneous Announcements

REMEMBER: ELECTRICAL OUTAGE FOR BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES BLDG
8-4-06 (Friday) from 12:01 am to 6:00 am

AFFECTING ALL ELECTRICAL POWERED EQUIPMENT IN THE BUILDING

All questions to:

Facilities Management,
John Stoffel
phone: 612-624-7278 cell: 612-290-4992

Editors: Pete Snustad, Dept. Head; Anne Caton, Admin. Director; Christina Pattison, Student Secretarial Assistant; Sandesh Nicol, Temporary Office Assistant

This publication is available in hard copy or email by request. Please contact Sandesh Nicol via email (nicol023@umn.edu) or call 625-1234 if you would like to receive a copy.

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