

Graduate Program Governance Handbook 2018–2019



Plant and Microbial Biology Graduate Program
University of Minnesota • Twin Cities

<https://cbs.umn.edu/academics/departments/pmb/graduate-education>

Plant and Microbial Biology Graduate Program

GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK

This handbook is meant to as a guide and resource related to governance of the PMB Graduate Program. This is one of three handbooks that are maintained by the PMB Graduate Program, the other two are the Graduate Student Handbook and the Graduate Faculty Handbook.

Table of contents

Program overview	1
Key people and program resources	2
Graduate faculty membership and participation.....	3
Annual retreat.....	4
Program leadership	4
Committees.....	6
Program funding	10
Past directors of graduate study	11

Plant and Microbial Biology program overview

The Plant and Microbial Biology (PMB) Graduate Program strives to provide outstanding interdisciplinary education for careers in academia, industry, government, and public service. The program is committed to diversity in both scientific pursuits and in the community of people conducting that science.

The graduate program works to recruit students from diverse backgrounds and to provide those students with:

- excellent interdisciplinary educational, research, and professional development experiences;
- possibilities to work on a broad range of cutting-edge research topics in plant, fungal, and microbial biology;
- opportunities to conduct independent research and develop as innovative educators; and
- opportunities to participate in the international plant science research community through seminars, colloquia, and conferences.

The PMB program expects students to develop the conceptual understanding, analytical skills, and technical knowledge that allow them to make important contributions to our understanding of biology and that lay the foundation for professional success.

PMB handbooks

The three PMB handbooks (student, faculty, and governance) are intended to provide students and faculty in the PMB program with guidance on the expectations, requirements, and rules of the program. Because the requirements, expectations, and opportunities change, these documents need to be revised with some frequency.

Petitions to change procedures, policies, and guidelines described in the handbooks are reviewed by the PMB Graduate Program Steering Committee. Upon the recommendation of the Steering Committee, proposed changes may be circulated among the program faculty. Members of the faculty may request a majority vote by the full faculty on any proposed change. This majority is defined as a simple majority of those voting on a given issue. Voting may occur electronically or during a meeting of the graduate faculty. Should no faculty member request a vote, proposals may be enacted by unanimous consent of the Steering Committee. Program changes, including matters of compliance with University policy, are enacted by notifying faculty and students electronically and by updating the program handbooks.

Key People and Program Resources

ACADEMIC PROCESS, RESOURCES, SUPPORT, FUNDING, ETC.

Dr. Bob Stupar
Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)
stup0004@umn.edu | 612.625.5769

Dr. Peter Kennedy
Associate Director of Graduate Studies (ADGS)
kennedyp@umn.edu | 612.624.8519

Sara Eliason
Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC)
140 Gortner
seliason@umn.edu | 612.625.4222

PHYTOGRADS – PMB GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION

Jaclyn Noshay
Ph.D. student and Phytograds president
nosha003@umn.edu

HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE—IN SNYDER HALL

Kelsey Cook
Graduate assistant appointments
cookx632@umn.edu

Graduate faculty

MEMBERSHIP

Members of the graduate faculty for the PMB Graduate Program represent a broad array of administrative units within the University. Eligibility is based on the applicant's research record, their stated and potential contribution to the educational mission of the program, as well as the University Policy on the Eligibility to Serve on Graduate Committees:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/APPOINTGRADCOMM.html>

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Prospective PMB Graduate Program faculty members send a curriculum vitae and a letter to the DGS, expressing a commitment to participate in the program and acknowledging the responsibilities of graduate faculty. The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) circulates these materials among the Steering Committee, which arrives at a decision on behalf of the program faculty. A simple majority of Steering Committee members must favor the nomination. (DGS and Associate Director of Graduate Studies are voting members. The DGS determines the result if the vote is tied). University faculty members seeking to join the PMB program are encouraged to present a research seminar in the PMB Colloquium.

PARTICIPATION

Faculty members are expected to participate in the program annually through activity in at least one or more of the following activities:

- participate in program governance by serving on a committee, as ADGS, or as DGS;
- teach courses for graduate credit within the graduate program;
- host rotations for first year students;
- serve as an advisor of a PMB student, or on PMB advisory or examination committees; and
- regularly attend PMB-sponsored seminars, PMB graduate program faculty meetings, and annual retreats.

The Steering Committee may periodically review faculty participation. Faculty who do not contribute to the program over a period of two years may be asked to renew their commitment to participate in some capacity or withdraw from the program.

GRADUATE FACULTY MEETINGS

A meeting for the full graduate program faculty will be held each fall semester. At this meeting the DGS presents the state of the program budget and discusses any recent or proposed changes in governance, curricula, or program composition. PMB Graduate Program faculty members are expected to attend this meeting.

EXTERNAL COMMITTEE MEMBER

People from outside the university may participate on students' advisory and examination committees. The outside members must bring scientific expertise that cannot be found among the faculty at the University of Minnesota. To request an external committee member, the requesting student and their advisor must send letter of request and the proposed committee member's CV to the DGS. If the DGS approves the committee member, then the DGS asks the CBS Associate Dean for Graduate Studies to approve of the appointment.

Annual Retreat

An annual retreat will be held each year. All PMB students and faculty members are expected to attend. The retreat provides opportunities for interactions among students and faculty members, discussion of program issues, and highlighting student research. Students organize the retreat with the assistance of a faculty member and the Graduate Program coordinator. Some time is usually devoted to a DGS-led discussion of program-related issues.

Program Leadership

A partnership among the CBS Dean, Associate Deans for Research and Graduate Education, the Director of Graduate Studies, and Department Heads comprise the leadership of the PMB Graduate Program.

Members of the PMB graduate faculty serve the positions of Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), Associate Director of Graduate Studies (ADGS), and the Steering Committee for terms of two years each. The ADGS typically advances to the position of DGS.

The PMB department head identifies candidates for ADGS in consultation with program faculty, heads of affiliated departments, or by an ad hoc nominating committee at the head's designation. The appointment of faculty who agree to serve as ADGS and/or DGS is subject to a majority vote of the graduate faculty. This majority is defined as a simple majority of those voting. Voting may be in person or electronic.

Faculty appointments to the Steering Committee are subject to a majority vote of the graduate faculty. Other PMB graduate program committees including Admissions, Awards, Colloquium, and ad hoc committees are appointed by the DGS. Committee membership is expected to maintain disciplinary diversity and terms are staggered to maintain a level of experience on each committee.

Student involvement

The PMB graduate students will nominate representatives to serve on the Steering and Colloquium Committees. The representative to the Steering Committee is typically the Phytograds (PMB graduate student association) president. The Phytograds president also attends the PMB graduate faculty meetings. The Colloquium Committee and the organization of the annual PMB retreat each require student participation.

DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES (DGS)

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) is a member of the PMB graduate faculty who was elected as the previous Associate Director of Graduate Studies. The primary administrative responsibility for the conduct of program affairs is vested in the DGS. The DGS consults with the ADGS and the Steering Committee on matters that require a broad base of input from the various areas of specialization within the program.

The Graduate School policy on the DGS appointment, roles, and responsibilities is online at <http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/APPOINTDGS.html>.

The primary responsibilities of the DGS are to:

- Provide academic guidance and oversight.
- Manage academic operations including coordination of funding, aid, and fellowships
- Ensure responsible mentorship and student advising.
- Resolve conflicts between students and advisors.
- Address and report on incidents of academic dishonesty and sexual harassment.
- Report on the financial resources allocated to the program.
- Monitor and develop program metrics, including student success and placement.
- Develop strategies to increase the quality and diversity of the student body.
- Coordination and reporting to the Graduate School, CBS, and CFANS administration.
- Oversee and participate in recruiting activities and the new student orientation at Itasca

The DGS consults with the Department Head and Associate Dean(s) to:

- Determine the size of the recruitment class, in order to prevent cost overruns.
- Manage and evaluate financial resources.
- Review the program and curriculum
- Resolve student/advisor conflicts.
- Address concerns related to Academic dishonesty and sexual harassment
- Develop new courses or course requirements.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES (ADGS)

The Associate Director of Graduate Studies (ADGS) is a member of the PMB graduate faculty and is elected by a majority of the graduate faculty.

1. The PMB department head identifies candidates for ADGS in consultation with program faculty, heads of affiliated departments, or by an ad hoc nominating committee at the head's designation.
2. The appointment of faculty who agree to serve as ADGS and/or DGS is subject to a majority vote of the graduate faculty. This majority is defined as a simple majority of those voting. Voting may be in person or electronic.
3. The PMB Department Head then requests approval from the Associate Deans in the CBS office for the incoming ADGS.

The individual serves a four-year term: two years as ADGS followed by two-years as DGS. A faculty member may serve multiple terms as ADGS/DGS, but may not serve two consecutive four-year terms.

The primary responsibilities of the ADGS are to:

- Chair the admissions committee.
- Nominate students for fellowships.
- Participate in the new student orientation at Itasca.
- Other responsibilities as agreed upon by the DGS and ADGS.

GRADUATE PROGRAM COORDINATOR (GPC)

The Department of PMB has administrative responsibility for the PMB Graduate Program. The Department provides a program coordinator to assist students, handle applications, manage program communication, administer the budget and financial resources, and handle other administrative tasks. The DGS and GPC will meet regularly to address regular program needs, ensure that the program is running smoothly, and to identify and respond to issues before they become problematic.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee consists of the DGS, the Associate DGS, four PMB graduate faculty representing disciplinary areas, the GPC, and a graduate student representative elected by the graduate students (usually the Phytograds student association president). The GPC and the graduate student representative serve as *ex officio* members and do not vote. To facilitate representation of the diverse fields represented by the PMB program, the Steering Committee should include representatives from each of four disciplinary areas: (i) Genetics, Genomics, and Computational Biology, (ii) Cellular, Molecular, and Developmental Biology, (iii) Ecology, Evolution, and Phylogenetics, and (iv) Biochemistry, Physiology, and Systems Biology.

Prior to an election of the committee, nominations are solicited from the entire graduate program faculty. The two faculty members receiving the most nominations in each area are asked to stand for election and the member in each area with the most votes is elected to a two-year term. Typically, two new Steering Committee members are elected each year. Steering Committee members representing disciplinary areas may not serve two consecutive terms (note, if they are elected as ADGS they will serve two terms on the committee, but not as a representative of a disciplinary area.).

The Steering Committee:

- consults with and advises the DGS and ADGS on program procedures and policies;
- votes on nominations to the PMB graduate faculty;
- periodically reviews faculty participation in the program;
- assists in various aspects of the program as requested; and
- reviews program courses as well as the overall curriculum.

STANDING COMMITTEES

In addition to the Steering Committee, the PMB Graduate Program has three standing committees: Admissions, Awards, and Colloquium. Each of these committees consists of three to four faculty members appointed by the DGS. The membership of these committees should represent the broad spectrum of disciplines represented by the faculty in the Program. Committee terms are for two years, members may serve multiple consecutive terms.

Admissions Committee

The Admissions Committee, which is usually chaired by the ADGS (*ex officio* member of the committee), works with the GPC to review applicants to the PMB program and identify applicants to offer admission. The admissions committee is expected to consider applicants' experiences and potential for success, program budget and expected budgets in the coming years, interest by one or more faculty members to serve as an advisor, and the composition (in terms of gender, experiences, national or racial identity,

disciplinary areas, etc.) of the students currently in the PMB program. In order to allow program faculty to identify potential advisees, the Admissions Committee is expected to make all applications available to all PMB Graduate Program faculty, so that faculty members have an opportunity to express interest in specific applicants.

Admitted students are sent a letter from the DGS with the details of their financial offer. The program strives to provide full support (a half-time research assistantship or fellowship from departmental, program, University, or external sources plus tuition and health insurance benefits) to all students for one semester of their first year (usually the first semester). In some years, when financial resources are available, the program has been able to support first-year students for the entire first year.

Awards Committee (Financial Aid Committee prior to 2018)

The Awards Committee is responsible for evaluating applications to the Doctoral Dissertation, CBS Excellence, and Phinney fellowships, as well as other awards or funding opportunities that are available through or administered by the PMB Graduate Program. In all cases, the committee provides recommendations to the DGS/ADGS/GPC, and the DGS and ADGS make final award decisions. The committee also may be asked to help identify and prepare applications for external funding possibilities, such as training grants.

Colloquium Committee

The Colloquium Committee is responsible for organizing a seminar series involving outside speakers, program graduate faculty, and graduate students. The PMB Colloquium is composed of 10 to 12 seminars per semester, although the number of seminars and invitees from outside of the University of Minnesota will vary from year to year and depend on the number of seminars that need to be presented as part of faculty searches, promotion and tenure proceedings, graduating PMB doctoral students, and budget limitations.

PMB doctoral students are expected to present a seminar as part of the PMB Colloquium in the semester of, or the semester prior to, their Ph.D. defense—and the colloquium committee needs to schedule these. Student seminars may be the same length as regular seminars (i.e., 45 minutes plus time for questions), but it is expected that there will be two student seminars per scheduled seminar time (i.e., two 25-minute seminars). Joint hosting of seminar speakers (with EEB, BTI, or other programs or departments) is strongly encouraged.

The Colloquium Committee includes one or two graduate students selected by the Phytograds.

The Colloquium Committee is expected to:

- ask PMB faculty and graduate students for potential speakers they are interested in hosting;
- ensure invited speakers include a balance of topics representing the full spectrum of the research interests of PMB program members;
- provide guidance and support for student-invited speakers;
- formally invite the speaker, or ask the host to invite the speaker; and
- work with departmental staff to arrange travel, accommodations, meals, and to advertise seminars.

General colloquium logistics:

- The PMB Colloquium is set for Tuesdays, 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- The seminar is scheduled for one hour (45 minutes of presentation plus time for questions) and held in 105 Cargill (unless otherwise noted).
- As of fall 2018, speakers stay at The Graduate Hotel on the East Bank campus. The PMB graduate program will pay for one to two nights stay; additional nights will be the responsibility of the host or the speaker.
- Meals
 - One group dinner will be reimbursed up to a total of \$140, before taxes and tip.
 - *Please note: A minimum of four people, including the speaker, must attend to claim the \$140 maximum. If there are fewer than four people, the total reimbursement is \$35/person, not including taxes or tip. Reimbursements will not exceed \$140, before taxes and tip.*
 - Two breakfasts for the speaker will be reimbursed. A University host may be present for both meals, up to a maximum of \$30 total may be reimbursed.
- Alcohol expenses will not be reimbursed and may not appear on any receipts submitted for reimbursement. This is University policy: <https://policy.umn.edu/finance/hospitality>.
- If a faculty member is interested in hosting a reception at their house, in lieu of dinner at a restaurant, the program can provide some support to pay for food. This should be arranged with the GPC and DGS before the reception.
- All itemized receipts must be submitted along with the signed reimbursement form as soon as possible and no later than two weeks after incurring the expense. The names of everyone in attendance is required for justification.

Host Responsibilities:

- Arrange itinerary, including times to meet with PMB Graduate Program faculty, students, and postdocs. Share itinerary with St. Paul Administrative Cluster staff.
- Arrange meals (minus graduate student lunch on Tuesday) while speaker is on campus, usually two dinners and one or two breakfasts.
- Provide or arrange transportation to/from airport.
- Arrange for clean up after seminar.
 - Move any leftover coffee/cookies to first floor Cargill kitchen.
 - Put tables away in storage in seminar room.
- Arrange for clean up after reception, if applicable. (The reception schedule is set before the beginning of each semester.)
 - Put any leftover food/drinks in Cargill refrigerator.
 - Put reception/coffee tables away in storage in seminar room.
- Ensure that the speaker signs necessary forms for reimbursement.
- Ensure that itemized receipts for travel costs and meals are handed in to office staff.
- If staying at a hotel, ensure that meals are not charged to the speaker's room.
- Help the speaker set up for their talk, introduce at seminar.
- The program can cover the costs of food for a post-seminar reception. The program does not have funds to provide for alcohol at these receptions, although if a permit is obtained, alcohol may be provided using non-University funds. The DGS, GPC, and Colloquium Committee chair determine the frequency of receptions before the beginning of each semester.

Support staff responsibilities:

- Advertise colloquium series and weekly events.
- Assist speaker with arranging transportation if requested.
- Make hotel arrangements, if needed.
- Arrange IT needs for speaker.
- Organize graduate student lunch with the speaker.
- Order and set out refreshments for the seminar and receptions.
- Apply for alcohol permits, as needed, for receptions.
- Submit reimbursements for speaker and host.

Program Funding

PMB GRADUATE PROGRAM

The PMB Graduate Program funding comes from the Provost's office through the College of Biological Sciences dean's office. Each year, the CBS dean's office notifies the DGS and GPC of the total funding available for program operations in the upcoming fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).

The DGS and GPC have the responsibility for developing the annual PMB program budget, for tracking expenditures, and for advocating for program funding needs with the CBS dean's office. The DGS and GPC present the draft budget to the PMB Graduate Program Steering Committee at the group's fall meeting. The Steering Committee may recommend adjustments to the program budget and must approve the budget. The DGS then presents the program budget to the full PMB Graduate Program faculty at the fall faculty meeting.

PMB Graduate Program funding priorities are to:

- support graduate students with first-year graduate research assistantships and summer fellowships;
- support development and enrichment opportunities, such as career development funds for students to attend conferences and workshops and running the PMB Colloquium);
- support student community-building and outreach activities; and
- support recruitment of prospective students.

TEACHING ASSISTANT FUNDING

Teaching assistants for PMB courses are supported from the PMB departmental teaching assistant account. The DGS and GPC make teaching assistant assignments based on PMB instructional needs, PMB graduate student financial need, PMB graduate student subject matter expertise, and teaching assistant funding available. Prior to finalizing teaching assistant assignments, the DGS and GPC consult with the PMB department head to ensure courses have sufficient instructional support and sufficient teaching assistant funding is available. PMB courses with labs have priority for teaching assistants. Any other teaching assistant requests from instructors will be honored as funds and graduate teaching assistants are available.

Teaching assistants in general biology classes (e.g., BIOL) are supported from the Biology Teaching and Learning (BTL) teaching assistant account. PMB graduate students who request a teaching assistantship and who are not assigned to a PMB course are recommended to the BTL student services staff for placement as teaching assistant in a general biology course. BTL does not guarantee availability of a specific number of teaching assistant slots.

Past Directors of Graduate Study

2018 – 2020	Robert Stupar	Dept. of Agronomy and Plant Genetics
2017 – 2018	Peter Tiffin	Dept. of Plant and Microbial Biology
2015 – 2017	Sue Gibson	Dept. of Plant Biology
2013 – 2015	Cindy Tong	Dept. of Horticultural Science
2011 – 2013	George Weiblen	Dept. of Plant Biology
2010 – 2011	Gary Muehlbauer	Dept. of Agronomy and Plant Genetics
2008 – 2010	Jane Glazebrook	Dept. of Plant Biology
2006 – 2008	Jerry Cohen	Dept. of Horticultural Science
2004 – 2006	Carolyn Silflow	Dept. of Plant Biology
2002 – 2004	David Sommers	Dept. of Agronomy and Plant Genetics
2000 – 2002		
1998 – 2000		