

## North Central Division Meets in Manhattan



region and beyond.

The Kansas State University (KSU) Department of Plant Pathology welcomed the APS North Central Division to Manhattan, KS, for the 2013 meeting, featuring three days of field trips, workshops, presentations, posters, and more. The conference was held on June 12–14, 2013, and was attended by more than 100 participants from across the region and beyond.

A special symposium, “Game changers: Transformative technologies and ideas,” featured engaging, diverse presentations on human pathogens on plants, virus-vector interactions, RNAi, and mobile technologies. A second symposium provided an insightful overview of the emerging disease wheat blast, held in conjunction with an international wheat blast working group organized by **Barbara Valent**. Field trips and workshops included a tour of the Konza Prairie Biological Station, a biosecurity workshop, a tour at the Biosecurity Research Institute, a visit to Heartland Plant Innovations and the Kansas Wheat Innovation Center, a sequencing workshop and tour of the KSU Integrated Genomics Facility, and a workshop on Impact Network Analysis. A special highlight was a day-long undergraduate outreach event, coordinated by **Chris Little** and numerous KSU volunteers. More than 35 participants from KSU and several other regional institutions in Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri visited field sites and laboratories. The students gained exposure to people, topics, and technologies involved in plant pathology research and careers.

The division honored members with special recognition at the awards banquet. The winner of the Student Oral Paper Competition was **Ismael Badillo-Vargas** (KSU). **Alexandria Leach-Kieffaber** (KSU), **Jessica Halvorson** (North Dakota State University [NDSU]), and **Jennifer Odom** (NDSU) earned first, second, and third prize, respectively, in the Student Poster Competition. **Albert Tenuta** (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs) was presented with the APS North Central Division Distinguished Service Award. **Kiersten Wise** (Purdue University) was presented with the APS North Central Division Early Career Award. The conference was coordinated by **Jim Stack** (immediate past president of the North Central Division), **Megan Kennelly** and **Erick DeWolf** (co-meeting logistical coordinators), **Tamra Jackson-Ziems** (Divisional Forum representative), and **Carl Bradley** (secretary-treasurer). Many KSU faculty, staff, and students also volunteered. Full meeting highlight photos are available on the APS website at [www.apsnet.org/members/divisions/nc/meetings](http://www.apsnet.org/members/divisions/nc/meetings).

The 2014 meeting will be held in Madison, WI, with coordination efforts led by current APS North Central Division President **Amanda Gevens**, University of Wisconsin. ■



APS North Central Division Student Travel Award Winners: (front row, kneeling, from left): Meriem Aoun, Alexandria Leach-Kieffaber, Jessica Halvorson, Kyle Broderick, and Ismael Badillo-Vargas; (standing, from left): Oscar Hernandez, Sidrat Abdullah, Kelsey Mehl, Sheshanka Dugyala, Owusu Domfeh, Ananda Bandara, Albert Kertho, Jennifer Odom, William Zancan, Rashelle Matthieson, and Bethany Grabow (not pictured: Cole Thompson).



David Schmale, Megan McConnell, Anna Testen, Cory Outwater, Rebecca Melanson, Margarita Marroquin Guzman, Brittany Pierce, and Wade Elmer (not pictured Cassandra Swett)

## Top Graduate Students Showcase Their Talents in Austin

You may have noticed a new symposium at the APS-MSA Joint Meeting in Austin called “Plant Pathologists of the Future: Showcasing the Top Graduate Students from APS Division Meetings.” This symposium was one of the many outreach endeavors launched by the Divisional Forum to foster, promote, and celebrate the outstanding graduate students in our six divisions. Top graduate students were funded in part by their respective divisions to attend the national meeting and present their award-winning research presentations. More than 70 people were in attendance during the presentations. The concept for the symposium was initiated by **David Schmale** and **Wade Elmer** in 2011 and reached fruition this year in Austin. We applaud the following graduate students:

- **Margarita R. Marroquin Guzman**, Caribbean Division, “Prevalent citrus diseases in Puerto Rico”
- **Cory A. Outwater**, North Central Division, “Detection of boscalid resistance and the H272R mutation in the *SdhB* gene of *Blumeriella jaapii*”
- **Anna L. Testen**, Northeastern Division, “Detection of *Peronospora variabilis* in quinoa seeds”
- **Cassandra L. Swett**, Pacific Division, “Dualism in symbiosis: Growth and defense enhancement of symptomless infection by the pathogen *Fusarium circinatum* in *Pinus radiata* seedlings”
- **Brittany Pierce**, Pacific Division, “*Xylella fastidiosa* phoP/Q two-component system mediates colonization of grapevines and may be a potential target for Pierce’s disease control”
- **Megan E. McConnell**, Potomac Division, “*Phytophthora cinnamomi* as a possible contributor to white oak (*Quercus alba*) decline in Mid-Atlantic forests”
- **Rebecca A. Melanson**, Southern Division, “Genetic analyses of *ntpR* encoding a novel negative regulator for toxoflavin production in the rice-pathogenic bacterium *Burkholderia glumae*”

The session ended with a lively discussion about the participants’ experiences with presenting their research at division and national meetings. Each presenter also shared how they chose plant pathology as a career and their overall goal as future plant pathologists. All of the students recommended the continuation of this symposium at future annual meetings. ■