

96th APS Southern Division Meeting a Success



The Southern Division (SD) of the American Phytopathological Society held its 96th annual meeting February 7–9, 2019, in Gainesville, Florida. The meeting was attended by 150 people and included a premeeting tour, a welcome reception, student research competition sessions, poster sessions, technical sessions, a career development workshop, a graduate student meeting and social, an awards banquet, and a post-meeting tour.

The premeeting tour, the Gainesville Fungal Foray, took participants to Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park and Sweetwater Preserve, where they hiked on trails looking for alligators, wild horses, and bison, along with fungi. Although the larger wildlife eluded participants, birds, scenery, and fungi did not disappoint! Guided through Sweetwater Preserve by **Matthew Smith**, mycologist at the University of Florida, and **Emily Uhlmann** and **Richard Poole**, environmental specialists with Alachua County, foray attendees learned about the efforts to restore and preserve natural areas in Gainesville and found numerous fungal species.

The career development workshop, led by **Nicole Gauthier** with the assistance of a number of experts from academic and industry, was Networking 101, the fourth workshop in the Careers 101 Workshop series. More than 60 graduate students and post-docs learned and practiced networking skills during the workshop and were charged with the task of practicing those skills throughout the rest of the APS SD meeting.

The graduate students held their annual Graduate Student and Post-Doctoral Meeting and Social at the Cypress Grove and Brewery. The event, sponsored by **Alltech Crop Science**, provided an opportunity for students and post-docs to network with each other and discuss issues relevant to their role in the SD; to meet with and learn from **Eric Waldo**, Alltech Crop Science technical sales manager; and to elect a new SD graduate student representative.

One of the highlights of the SD meeting has always been the Graduate Student Research Competition. In keeping with past years' student competitions, this year's competition did not disappoint! Twenty-six students from 12 universities, representing almost all the states within the Southern Division, presented their research in the competition. **Madison McCulloch**, University of Kentucky, placed first for her presentation "*Colletotrichum* spp. causing fruit rots in Kentucky: Investigating potential for cross-infection and developing improved tools for identification." **Matthew Aaron Tucker**, Mississippi State University, placed second for his presentation "Monitoring plant health and quantifying fungal root pathogens within ultradwarf bermudagrass putting greens." **Kelsey Anderson**, University of Florida, and **Tracy Hawk**, University of Arkansas, tied for third for their presentations "Cropland connectivity: A risk factor for invasion and saturation by emerging pathogens and pests in the Caribbean" and "Assessment of root protection by fluopyram-treated seed against *Meloidogyne incognita*," respectively.



APS SD leadership, 2019–2020 (left to right): Tracy Hawk, graduate student representative; Fulya Baysal-Gurel, vice president; Trey Price, president-elect; Shaker Kousik, president; Albert Culbreath, division forum representative; Nicholas Dufault, immediate past president; and Rebecca Melanson, secretary-treasurer. Not pictured: Teddy Garcia-Aroca, graduate student representative.

Seven students participated in the student poster competition. **Usha Bhatta**, University of Georgia, placed first for her poster "Characterization of resistance to *Ustilago maydis* in teosinte and two maize-teosinte introgressed near isogenic lines." **David Moreira**, University of Florida, placed second for his poster "Effect of new non-fumigant nematicides on different trophic groups of nematodes."

An additional 38 presentations were given at the meeting, including 23 poster presentations and 15 oral presentations in the technical sessions on fungal diseases, population distribution and nematode management, viral and bacterial plant diseases, and diseases of crop plants.

Travel awards to attend the 2019 APS SD meeting were presented to **Tracy Hawk**, University of Arkansas; **Kathryn Haydon**, University of Arkansas; **Ying-Yu Liao**, University of Florida; and **S. Corinne Rhodes**, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

The SD Outstanding Plant Pathologist was awarded to **Albert Culbreath**, University of Georgia. Dr. Culbreath, APS SD Division Forum Representative, provided an update during the general business meeting from the APS Division Forum and also gave a presentation in which he highlighted the achievements, success, and leadership of numerous past award winners of the SD Graduate Student Research Award Competition.

The SD Donald M. Ferrin Memorial Service Award was awarded to **Robert (Bobby) Haygood**, Corteva Agriscience. Bobby has been a long-time advocate and supporter of connecting graduate students with industry professionals and divisional leadership and has sought opportunities for those connections. He feels that paying it forward is important for the plant pathology community and his overall support, service, and dedication to the SD are greatly appreciated.

Judging travel award applications, research presentations, and posters is no easy task, especially when so many are deserving of awards. Many thanks go out to our judges: **Fulya Baysal-Gurel**, **Kaitlyn Bissonnette**,

SD Meeting, continued on page 93



Attendees at the 2019 APS SD meeting awards banquet in Gainesville, Florida.