

ANNOUNCEMENT

Plant Breeding Consortium Graduate Fellows Program at NCSU

Program Summary

The Plant Breeding Consortium Graduate Fellows (PBC-GF) Program has been developed to provide financial support and recognition for future plant breeders while they pursue research and training leading toward Master of Science or Doctoral degrees. These awards are supported by the North Carolina Foundation Seed Producers, Inc. Plant Breeding Endowment and are intended to recruit excellent students to NC State University's plant breeding programs. Students transitioning from NC State's M.S. to Ph.D. programs are also eligible for consideration.

The goal of the PBC-GF is to foster research, teaching, and interdisciplinary collaborations to promote the development of improved crop varieties serving the needs of North Carolina, the USA, and the world. This interdepartmental consortium embraces a full range of research programs, courses, and crops. Plant breeders at NC State are based in different colleges (College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and College of Natural Resources) and departments (Crop and Soil Sciences, Forestry, and Horticultural Science), and they focus on breeding of field crops, horticultural crops, turfgrass, and trees. Other involved faculty members are located in the departments of Statistics, Molecular and Structural Biochemistry, Entomology and Plant Pathology, Food Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences, and Plant and Microbial Biology, among others. More than 65 faculty members contribute expertise in molecular breeding and selection technologies, plant transformation, genomics, proteomics, metabolomics, quantitative genetics, product quality, and computational sciences, in addition to basic field breeding.

Fellowship Program

- Both Master of Science and Doctoral Students will be eligible for a \$3,000 per year fellowship to supplement their baseline stipend (\$27,000-\$29,000/year) contingent

on maintaining continuous good standing in their graduate program for the duration defined by NC State's Graduate Student Support Plan (4 academic semesters for Master's; 8 academic semesters for PhD after prior relevant Master's; 10 academic semesters for a PhD after a Bachelor's degree). The stipend will be dispersed twice a year, \$1,500 in each the Fall and Spring semesters.

- Additionally, this fellowship program will pay the graduate student fees charged by NC State University (\$2605 annually in 2022 and subject to increase afterwards).
- Selected Fellows will receive a letter of offer from their home departments that includes the details of the fellowship.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a PBC Graduate Fellowship, the student must:

- Intend to specialize in plant breeding while enrolled as a full-time graduate student in a relevant departmental degree program at NC State University. US citizens, permanent residents, and international students are eligible to apply.
- New students must complete and submit a full application to the NC State Graduate School by February 15th; those who meet all the requirements and qualify for full admission to the University and the targeted departmental graduate program are eligible to be nominated. NC State students transitioning from a Master's to a Ph.D. program must write a statement of interest regarding further training in plant breeding at NC State and submit it to their prospective Advisor (see below) by **February 15th**. The prospective Advisor has until **March 1st** to submit the nomination. The PBC Fellowship Committee will make a decision by **March 15th**.
- Identify a faculty Advisor or co-Advisor among the group of core plant breeding faculty in the Plant Breeding Consortium, who will commit in writing to provide the student's baseline stipend, tuition costs, and medical insurance costs, as well as to support the student's research costs. Alternatively, other verifiable fellowships or financial support identified by the student or faculty Advisor may provide all or part of these baseline costs.*
- Be nominated to receive the Fellowship by the Advisor, which implies that the student has an excellent prior academic record and evidence of prior accomplishments and/or strong motivation related to plant breeding. The nomination letter should not exceed 2 pages, and it should highlight the student's qualifications, motivation, and related experience.

- NC State plant breeding graduate students who have been admitted and started their course of studies during the Spring semester of a given year can be nominated as candidates for the fellowship award before **March 1st**.

Program Requirements

To allow evaluation of fellowship renewal, awardees should submit to the Director of the PBC, no later than February 15th of each year: (1) a current CV and (2) 2-page report detailing their progress. In addition, the Advisor should submit a letter of support. Students should consult their departmental guidelines/timelines, to ensure that the requirements for satisfactory progress are met.

Evidence of satisfactory progress is provided by factors such as:

- (a) Continuing full-time enrollment and good academic standing (GPA of 3.000 or higher);
- (b) Establishing and meeting with the Advisory Committee to generate a Graduate Plan of Work that has been submitted and approved on-line by the end of the first year, followed by at least yearly meetings with the Advisory Committee;
- (c) For Ph.D. students, taking the preliminary exam in a timely manner;
- (d) Presentations at meetings and/or publications in high quality journals;
- (e) Participation and/or leadership within the Plant Breeding Graduate Student Club;
- (f) Participation and/or leadership in other campus or professional organizations;
- (g) Teaching, outreach and/or mentoring within and outside NC State; and
- (h) Other activities demonstrating academic and professional excellence and leadership during training in plant breeding.

Should a student not be making satisfactory progress the Fellowship may be terminated.

** A baseline stipend of \$27,000/year for MS students and \$29,000/year for PhD students should be secured by the prospective Advisor*