IBBR Researchers Take Part in Annual Joint Plant Symposium

June 6, 2019 - Improving crop yields to meet rapidly increasing global food needs and protecting crops against destructive pathogens were key topics as leading plant biologists from Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia gathered on the UMCP campus last week for an annual plant symposium. The 2019 Joint Plant Biology Symposium of the Mid-Atlantic Section of the American Society of Plant Biologists (MAS-ASPB) and the University of Maryland, held on May 30-31, 2019, was organized by IBBR Fellow Dr. Shunyuan Xiao (Professor, UMCP Department of Plant Science & Landscape Architecture), IBBR Affiliate Fellow Dr. Wendy Peer (Associate Professor, UMCP Department of Environmental Science and Technology), and Dr. Mark Holland (Professor and Associate Chair, Department of Biological Sciences, Salisbury University). The two-day symposium is an important annual event at which scientists network and discuss ongoing research efforts, funding scenarios, teaching programs, career development, and topics influencing plant biology. Since the event is open to all levels of plant scientists, it is also a wonderful platform for students and postdoctoral fellows to present their work and to interact with and learn from leading plant biologists from academia and industry.
Dr. Xiao welcomed 110 attendees to the symposium, including several researchers from IBBR. Current ASPB president Dr. Robert Last from Michigan State University gave a special lecture, and the keynote address, entitled "Live and let die: A defense strategy in plants," was given by Dr. Xinnian Dong, Howard Hughes Medical Institute-Gordon and Betty Ford Foundation Investigator at Duke University, and member of the National Academy of Sciences. The program included sessions focused on plant development, plant cell biology (chaired by Dr. Wendy Peer), plant genomics, plant biotic interaction (chaired by IBBR Affiliate Fellow Dr. Nidhi Rawat), plant bioengineering (chaired by IBBR Affiliate Fellow Dr. Yiping Qi), and population genetics and beyond (co-chaired by IBBR Fellow Dr. Edward Eisenstein). IBBR researcher Ying Wu was recognized with one of five best presentation awards at the event for her poster entitled, "To be deployed or to be degraded: mechanisms controlling the destiny of the RPW8.2 missile," detailing work that she completed in Dr. Xiao's lab at IBBR.

“Unlike larger national meetings, the Mid-Atlantic Joint Symposium is one of the best venues for students and postdoctoral fellows to present their work in a rigorous but supportive environment, get insightful comments from an engaged audience, and make connections for the next step in their scientific careers,” said Eisenstein. “With ever tighter resources limiting travel, I think the sectional meetings offer members of scientific societies a great additional, vibrant, yet inexpensive, opportunity to discuss science and network with their colleagues.”

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