
**PLANT SOIL
& MICROBIAL
SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT**



Announcements

Notice of Change of Monthly Reports

Please note that starting February 1, 2021, there will be a change to how you will receive accounting updates on your accounts. You will receive multiple reports that show current expenditures along with encumbered salaries and current spendable amounts. We have started sending these reports to a handful of faculty for the testing phase. We have included a guide on how to read the reports and will be available for support [see the attached PDF called Admin.ReadingReport.v1]. If you are interested in seeing these reports, please contact **Ashley Lathrop**. If you have any questions regarding the new process, contact Ashley on Teams or by email.

2021 Drivers Certification Forms

Drivers Certification Forms for 2021 are due by January 31st. A blank form is attached to this newsletter. Please fill out, sign, and email to **AnnMarie Guldner** at guldner1@msu.edu. If your driver's license has been issued in a state other than Michigan, please include a current out of state driving record that includes the past 36 months.

Learn Basic Home Improvement with IPF

This year, many MSU employees moved offices from East Lansing to our homes. Our first few weeks may have involved getting a new office chair, stocking pens and paper, and ensuring we had adequate internet to link us to the thousands of Zoom meetings this summer and fall. We now enter the cold winter months and have other things to consider as we keep our home offices safe and healthy.

In a Summer 2020 WorkLife Survey, the MSU WorkLife Office asked folks from across campus to describe the work-life challenges they were experiencing at this time and 52% of respondents mentioned your challenges involved things at home, your house, your desk, your office, room, space, and/or equipment. The WorkLife Office responded to your feedback through a new WorkLife/IPF collaboration launching in 2021!

The first two webinars in the series include:

- [1/14/2021 Kickoff! What's changed on campus? Featuring Mark Lutkenhoff](#)
- [1/21/2021 How to Safely Use a Generator with Brian Powe](#)

[Click here to register and learn more about the WorkLife/IPF Series](#)

Announcements

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Event

Join fellow Spartans for a virtual community networking even to observe **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** on Monday, January 18, 2021 from 12- 1 PM.

To Join: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/98185043710>

Password: connect

Engage in pairs and small groups to talk about volunteering, social activism, and building community.

Hosted by Women's Networking Association and Woman's Advisory Committee for Support Staff

Building Access

If building access is needed, please remember to have your PI email **AnnMarie Guldner** (guldner1@msu.edu) directly with this request. Requests cannot be accepted from anyone other than your PI.

PSM Office Coverage

We will be staffing the PSM office on Wednesdays for essential needs only (Ex: keys). An appointment needs to be made prior by contacting **AnnMarie Guldner** at either guldner1@msu.edu or 517-353-0120. No drop ins will be allowed.

Upcoming Virtual Professional Development Courses

Communication

➤ Grammar Refresher - January 19: Strengthen your grammar and usage skills and present a more polished, professional image.

Customer Service

➤ Maximizing the Spartan Experience - February 3: This new and engaging training provides a foundational perspective related to enhanced customer service delivery.

Human Resources

➤ Certified Human Resources Specialist (CHRS) - February 2, 9, 16, 23, and March 2nd: In this five-session series, participants will receive fundamental knowledge to be a successful HR professional. Pass a take-home exam to achieve CHRS certification.

➤ Advanced CHRS - March 3 & 4: This course will help you, as a Certified Human Resources Specialist (CHRS), stay up to date on important employment and labor law changes, among other topics.

Leadership

➤ Engaging Teams for Maximum Performance - February 11: Methods of building trust, setting goals and providing feedback to help enhance employee engagement and working relationships will be shared.

Management

➤ Managing Employees Remotely - January 20: Shifting to remote work has required changes in our perspectives and approaches to work, and successfully managing employees in this environment means strengthening new and different skills. Learn more about how to do just that in this new, one-hour virtual course.

Announcements

Upcoming Virtual Professional Development Courses

Operations

- Query Studio - January 27: Query Studio is an ad hoc reporting tool that can be used to produce queries against enterprise data (HR and Finance) as well as additional data that has been added to the dimensional models in MSU's enterprise data warehouse.
- Records Management and Retention at MSU - February 25: Learn the rules, regulations, and strategies to help manage university records. Class will cover both electronic and print documents.

Professional Development

- The Power of Habit - February 23: In this course you will learn how habits are created and how to replace undesirable habits with productive ones. You will learn how to spot your habit loop, turn bad days into good data, and create habits that get the results you want.

You can find all of the current Organization and Professional Development courses on the HR website. Class enrollment is completed within the EBS Portal. Employees may use available educational assistance funds towards course fees (if any).

New MDARD Emergency Order Extends Pesticide Applicator Credentials Until June 2021

A new emergency rule filed on December 30, 2020 by Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) Director **Gary McDowell** extended pesticide applicator credential expiration dates as part of the state's continued COVID-19 response. Applicators whose credentials expired on December 31, 2019 or December 31, 2020 will have those credentials extended to June 30, 2021. In addition to extending the expiration date, the rule gives applicators six additional months to renew their credential via continuing education courses.

For additional information, please see the notice attached to this newsletter.

WACSS Anti-Racism Insight Series

January 20: **Shondra L. Marshall, Ph.D.** - Getting Underneath the Dynamics of Power and Privilege

Registration: <https://wacss.msu.edu/events/index.html>

Hosted by: MSU Woman's Advisory Committee for Support Staff (WACSS)

Co-Sponsors: MSU College of Agriculture & Natural Resources, MSU Inclusion & Intercultural Initiatives

PO Administrative Fee

12/21/2020 Update: A message was communicated last week regarding the implementation of a 1.75% Purchase Order Administrative Fee, scheduled to become effective January 1, 2021. Based on your concerns, we are delaying the rollout of the PO Administrative Fee until March 1, 2021, while we take time to consider all options. No additional information is available at this time.

Travel

2021 Mileage Reimbursement Rate

The Internal Revenue Service this week issued their 2021 standard mileage rate used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes. Beginning on January 1, 2021, the standard mileage rate for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be:

- 56 cents per mile driven for business use, down 1 cent from the rate for 2020 mileage reimbursement.
 - Concur database has been updated with this information
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Concur Profile Update

With travel planning and expense report activity mostly on hold this past year, you may not have spent time in Concur. Want to reacquaint yourself? Log into EBS, click on the Travel and Expense tile located on the home page and, we suggest, review your profile to add affinity program information, passport expiration updates, address/phone/emergency contact information changes, etc. And, if a Concur refresher would help, check out the education corner at Travel@State.

Assistance Resources

Travel policy and travel program support: travel@ctrl.msu.edu or 517-355-5000
Concur: concurhelp@msu.edu

Inbound travel

- Travelers coming to any of MSU's campuses are asked to follow the applicable protocol outlined on our Office of International Health and Safety's website: <https://oihs.isp.msu.edu/travel-during-covid-19-pandemic/health-protocol-inbound-travel>.
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University-sponsored travel

- For employees and students engaged in university-sponsored projects, **all non-essential outgoing domestic and international travel is suspended indefinitely**. If you feel you have essential travel needs, you can submit a waiver for review at least 3 weeks prior to departure. Prior to submitting the waiver, you will be required to obtain documentation from your unit administrator and, for students, from the cognizant advisor, college administrator or program director, affirming that the travel is essential in the context of both programmatic priorities and financial considerations. Note: The health and safety context for travel is currently very fluid, rapidly evolving by location and significantly impacted by frequent issuances of local, national, and international policies.
- Links to appropriate waivers can be found here: <https://oihs.isp.msu.edu/travel-during-covid-19-pandemic>.

Posting #688844 - Research Assistant I

Position Summary

The Cropping Systems Agronomy program in the Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences at Michigan State University is seeking a highly motivated individual to work as a member of the agronomy research program. This position will support research and extension efforts in understanding how various management practices influence crop productivity, profitability, and resiliency in the context of modern farming practices, climatic patterns, and economic conditions; and ultimately developing agronomic recommendations for corn, soybean, and small grain based cropping systems. The individual will work as a member of a team including professors, research assistants, graduate, and undergraduate students. This is a multifaceted position that includes field, laboratory, data management and presentation responsibilities.

Primary duties of the position include: preparation, planting, in-season management, and harvesting of Michigan Corn Performance Trials (MCPT) as well as other corn agronomic research trials at various locations throughout the state; data collection at trial location and its compilation, analysis, and publication in various sources; oral and written communication of research results to stakeholders; operation and maintenance of research equipment; supervise/train hourly and student employees; good communication with project team and support other research projects.

Specific Responsibilities:

30% Communicating with farmer cooperators and seed company representatives, designing and implementing MCPT and corn agronomic research field trials including trial randomization, seed counting and sorting, organizing equipment and supplies, and traveling to various Michigan locations.

30% Managing and leading field work that includes planting, collecting data and field notes, harvesting, and maintaining field trials at various Michigan locations.

20% Data compilation and analysis, summarization and presentation (oral and written) of research results, publication of MSU Extension E-431 bulletin

10% Safe operation and maintenance of field equipment, manage daily lab activities and website

10% Supervise and train hourly and student employees, support other research projects

Unit Specific Education/Experience/Skills

A Bachelor of Science degree from a four-year college degree program in Agronomy, Crop and Soil Sciences, or closely related discipline; one to three years of related and progressively more responsible work experience in managing cropping systems, field research techniques, operating field research and farm equipment, proficiency with Microsoft Office computer programs, organization and maintenance of research data, statistical analyses and interpretation of research data using various software programs; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. A Michigan Commercial Pesticide Applicators license is required within one month of hire. A Michigan Commercial Driver's License with "Group A" designation is required within 2-3 months of hiring.

Posting #688844 - Research Assistant I (continued)

Desired Qualifications

- Master of Science degree in Agronomy or related field
- Experience in conducting plant science experiments in the field; managing corn-based cropping systems
- Familiarity with university corn hybrid testing programs similar to MCPT
- Demonstrated proficiency in operating and repairing field research equipment with auto-guidance and variable rate technologies
- Skills in designing experiments and analyzing data in AGROBASE, ARM, SAS and/or other similar statistical programs
- Effective verbal and written communication skills. Experience in scientific writing and communication of results to scientific and farming community
- Experience managing and supervising employees

Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship, disability or protected veteran status.

Required Application Materials

Resume and/or Curriculum Vitae

Cover letter

Names and contact information for three professional references

Special Instructions

Address any questions and cover letter to **Dr. Maninder Singh** (msingh@msu.edu), Dept. of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences. Submit application documents to careers.msu.edu,

Work Hours

STANDARD 8-5

Description of End Date

This is an off-dated position funded for one year from date of hire with possible extension contingent upon funding renewal.

Summary of Physical Demands

Driving a university vehicle. Lifting, carrying, pushing/pulling, climbing.

Summary of Health Risks

Spray or mix organophosphate or carbamate insecticides. Work in noisy areas.

Bidding and Eligibility Ends on 1/19/2021 at 11:55 PM

IT News
Lee Duynslager

ONLINE: Zotero Workshop

An introduction to the free open source citation management program Zotero. In this workshop, participants will learn how to:

- Download references from MSU's online catalog and article databases
- Format citations and bibliographies in a Word document
- Use zotero.org to create groups and share references with other users

IT News

Lee Duynslager

ONLINE: Crash Course in Research Data Management

Have you ever lost a project file? Been unable to find the most recent version of a document? Suffered hard drive failure or had your laptop stolen? Been unable to open old files? Been told your data management plan wasn't detailed enough? Forgotten which file was which? Even small research projects can generate enough data and digital material to become confusing and vulnerable to loss. Start your next project (or class) with a plan to keep your project organized and your data safe, from inception until you are ready to share, reuse, or revisit the project whether next month or years from now. This workshop will provide strategies and insights for managing your data for effective collaboration, to meet funder requirements, or to preserve it for reuse or sharing in the future.

ONLINE: Writing Your Data Management Plan

Most grant applications now require a data management plan (DMP) that describes measures that investigators will take to manage and protect research data during a project, and how they will proactively share data at the end of a project. But DMP requirements are not always easy to understand and apply to a project. This workshop will help make sense of DMPs, survey the data management plan requirements of major funders, show how to use DMPTool, and give participants a jumpstart on writing their next data management plan. This workshop builds on Crash Course in Research Data Management, but is not required for attendance.

IT Update - January 2021

Dominic Colosimo

TeamViewer Software Update to MSU Owned computers - January 29th, 2021

What is happening?

On January 29th, the PSM IT team will be updating the TeamViewer application on your MSU Workstations.

- TeamViewer is a remote tool that helps IT professionals support clients and their devices more effectively and efficiently, whether the computers are located on or off campus.
- This tool has been instrumental in allowing us to continue providing technical support safely from afar during this unprecedented time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When will this update take place?

- On Friday, January 29, 2021, the update will be pushed to all Windows machines. We will be installing this program on Mac devices in the future.

What do I need to do?

- Nothing at this time, the new version will auto install on the 29th.
- This tool is configured to allow remote access when you, the user, pass the ID and one-time passcode off to a PSM IT team member to initialize a remote session. You will be required to be present to initiate the remote session.

Who do I contact if I have questions or need support?

Any questions or concerns please contact PSM IT.

- **Dominic Colosimo:** colosi14@msu.edu
- **Lee Duynslager:** duynslag@msu.edu

COVID-19 Updates (1-8-2021)

Furlough Agreements

MSU HR has extended the existing furlough agreements that are in place with APA, APSA, CTU and 1585 through June 30, 2021. Those agreements were originally set to expire Dec. 31, 2020.

Returning to work

- MSU continues to encourage everyone that can work remotely to do so. Supervisors should continue to ask employees who can work remotely to do so. Do not come to campus unless it is absolutely necessary.
- If you are on campus, [face coverings must be worn](#) (including all faculty, staff, students, vendors and visitors) indoors and outdoors while you are on property owned or governed by MSU and while participating in MSU-related or MSU-sponsored activities. If you have a medical condition that may prevent you from safely wearing a face covering, or you would like a clear face covering, you should contact MSU's Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to begin the accommodation process.
- As required by the governor, all employees must fill out a health screening form each day they come to campus to work. MSU IT and the University Physician's office have created an online [campuswide health-screening form](#) that units can use.
- Human Resources keeps [an updated FAQ website](#) for employees, and information on resources for faculty, staff and researchers operating in a virtual setting can be found at [remote.msu.edu](#).
- For those administrative and academic functions that are deemed necessary to return to campus, [a template has been created](#) to help guide them through that process, along with a [decision making guide](#). Those units must review and respond to the Return-to-Work Procedures and Protocols framework, which guides what steps need to be taken before bringing employees back to campus. A [document](#) that complements this guide is intended to be used as a guide for unit leadership to ensure a fair and equitable process in making staffing decisions.

Food and Drink Policy

Food and Drink Policy - Addendum to the PSSB Reopening Plan 7/23/2020

Based on the changing Executive Orders and needs of the MSU community, food consumption will be allowed in PSSB in posted designated areas. Please keep in mind that this change in policy may pose an increased risk of exposure and it is important to observe physical distancing, follow disinfecting protocols and spend minimal time in the room.

To meet these goals and maximize safety, the PSSB building SOP plan has been modified to:

- Note that it is always preferable to eat outside of the building when possible
- Conference and break rooms on the second floor will be open for food consumption. Please limit your time to 30-min to accommodate colleagues/other building occupants.
 - A279 - Horticulture conference room - maximum occupancy is 5
 - A271 - PSM conference room - maximum occupancy is 6
 - A246 - Break room - maximum occupancy is 5
- Maximum occupancy signs will be posted on each door. If the room is fully occupied, please check another designated space. If all conference and break rooms are fully occupied, check back later.
- Masks must be worn in each room unless actually consuming food.
- Kitchenettes will continue to be closed. There is no microwave or refrigerator usage allowed.
- Everyone should bring and remove all personal supplies for eating.
- The user is required to disinfect the space before and after each use following EPA approved guidelines (70% alcohol for 5-min; Sani-wipes for 3-min). Disinfectants will be present in the room.
- Snacks and community food to share should not be brought to work.

COVID-19 Vaccine Information For Faculty and Staff (1-8-2021)

Is MSU administering the vaccine?

Not at this time. The state and county health departments have indicated the COVID-19 vaccine only will be available from hospitals and local health departments. While MSU maintains clinical practices, the university does not have a health system and is not receiving doses from the state to administer.

What is happening at the MSU Agricultural and Livestock Pavilion?

MSU is providing the Ingham County Health Department space to use as a vaccine distribution center. Only those in the [appropriate phases](#), as outlined by the state of Michigan, and who live or work in Ingham County are eligible to receive it. This distribution site is not open to the public; an [appointment](#) is required.

Why am I hearing about vaccines being administered by the University of Michigan?

The state and county health departments have indicated the COVID-19 vaccine only will be available from hospitals and local health departments. Michigan Medicine, run by the University of Michigan, is a health system and received vaccine doses from the state of Michigan to administer.

How do I sign up to receive the vaccine?

First, you need to be sure that you fall within the priority group currently recommended to receive the vaccine. You can determine what priority group you are in and if you are eligible to receive the vaccine at this time by reviewing the [MDHHS priority guidance](#). When your time comes to make an appointment to receive your vaccine, visit Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine.

Will the university require vaccines for faculty, staff and students?

The university is not mandating a vaccine for spring semester 2021. However, MSU leadership strongly urges members of the community to receive the vaccine when it is available to them. Not only will receiving the vaccine protect you from the virus, it also protects your friends and loved ones.

Do I need to keep wearing a mask after I receive the vaccine?

Yes. It is vital that you keep wearing a face covering and practice all [COVID-19 related safety measures](#), as it will take many months before everyone is protected.

Who do I contact for more information about COVID-19 vaccines?

Local health departments are the best resource for information about vaccines. It is recommended you visit your local health department website as several have frequently asked questions posted online.

The state of Michigan also has a some [frequently asked questions](#) on its website.

Will MSU be administering the COVID vaccine?

- The state of Michigan is leading initial distribution plans for a COVID-19 vaccine. At this time, the university is not directly administering the vaccine. As we learn more about state distribution plans and its availability to our students, faculty and staff, we will keep you informed.

Face Coverings Updated 01/04/2021

Face coverings should:

1. be non-medical grade to maintain supplies for health care use,
2. fit snugly against the side of your face,
3. cover your nose and mouth,
4. be secured with ties or ear loops and
5. allow for breathing without restriction.

Cloth face coverings should only be worn for one day at a time, and they must be properly hand washed or laundered with soap/detergent before subsequent use. Face coverings may vary (for example, disposable non-medical masks or neck gaiters are acceptable).

In addition to wearing face coverings, whether you are on- or off-campus, you also must adhere to the guidelines and recommendations from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) as well as federal and [state government](#) authorities, in order to protect your own health and the health of the entire MSU community.

Protocol - MSU COVID 19 Testing and Reporting

Please see this [link https://msu.edu/together-we-will/students-parents/](https://msu.edu/together-we-will/students-parents/) and <https://msu.edu/together-we-will/faculty-staff/> for current COVID-19 testing and reporting protocol.

Vehicle Use Policy

Please see the attached COVID-19 Vehicle Occupancy Guidance. (September 2020)

MSU Academic Calendar

Spring 2021

January 19	Classes Begin (Online)
January 25	In-Person Instruction Begins
January 18	Holiday - University Open, Classes Cancelled
March 2-3	Break Days
March 10	Middle of Semester
April 21	Classes End
April 22-23	Study Days
April 26-30	Final Exams
May 1-8	Commencements

Spring 2021 Commencement Dates

Due to COVID-19, ceremony specific information is not available at this time.

For additional information go to <https://commencement.msu.edu/>

PSM Office Contact Information / Hours

Effective March 24, 2020 the PSM Administration Offices are closed. During this time of uncertainty, please be patient with any request that you may have placed with a PSM support staff member. Know that PSM support staff will get to your request as quickly as possible.

AnnMarie Guldner	guldner1@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	7 AM-3 PM
Ashley Lathrop	danas@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-12 PM & 1-5 PM
Brian Horgan	horganb@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-12 PM & 1-5 PM
Christiina Donley	tymoszew@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-12 PM & 1-5 PM
Debbie Williams	williade@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	7 AM-3 PM
Dominic Colosimo	colosi14@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-12 PM & 1-5 PM
Gina Centeno	centeno@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8:15 AM-2:45 PM
Hannah O'Mara	omarahan@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-12 PM & 1-5 PM
Lee Duynslager	duynslag@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-12:30 PM & 1-4:30 PM
Lisa Bowen	bowenli1@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-4 PM
Mackenzie Graham	graham2@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-12 PM & 12:30-4:30 PM
Rachel Jorgensen	eschrach@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	6:30 AM-3:00 PM
Sandie Litchfield	litchfi9@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	7:30 AM-12 PM & 1-4:30 PM

2021 PSM Payroll Schedule

Attached to this newsletter is the PSM 2021 Payroll Schedule

Entering Hours Into EBS: Temp-On-Calls & Undergrad Students

Effective January 3, 2021 we will start the process for temp on-calls and undergrad students to enter their own hours into EBS with their direct supervisor approving these hours on a bi-weekly basis. Attached are the general instructions on this process. We will be forwarding a more detailed process to all PSM in the very near future.

PSM Payroll Time Reporting

Due Date Reminders for **biweekly payroll** (includes labor and student)

Reminder: If your employee's time is not submitted, they will not be paid.

- For the January 29th pay date (for time worked from January 3-16) your time is due by 5 PM on Tuesday, January 19th.
- For the February 12th pay date (for time worked from January 17-30) your time is due by 5 PM on Tuesday, February 2nd.
- For the February 26th pay date (for time worked from January 31-February 13) your time is due by 5 PM on Tuesday February 16th.

Newsletter Submissions

Send newsletter submissions to AnnMarie Guldner at guldner1@msu.edu

Deadline: Thursdays by 10:00 AM