



RESEARCH AND  
TEACHING GREENHOUSES



FIBER & BIOPOLYMER  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE



QUAKER AVE.  
RESEARCH FARM

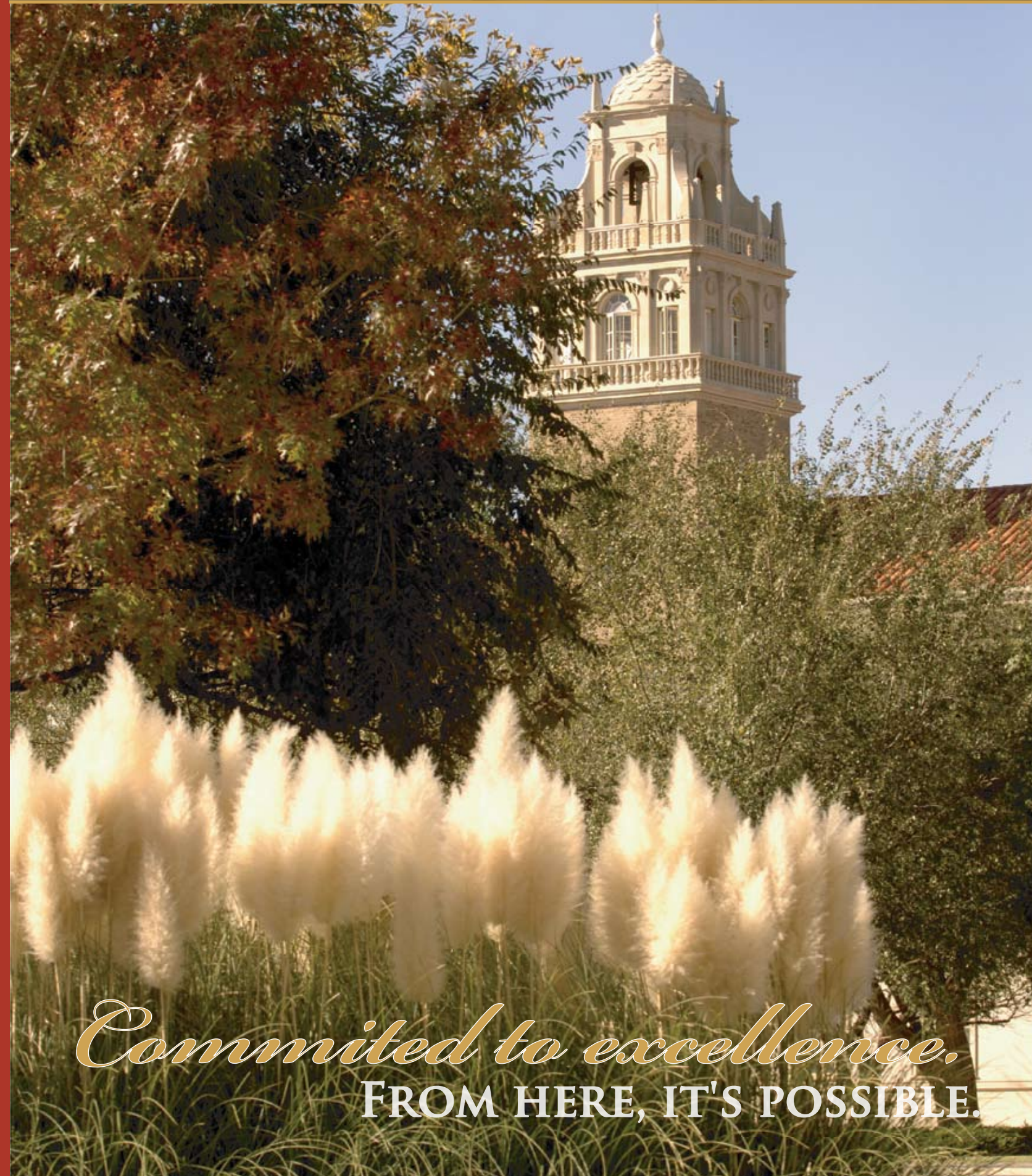


NEW DEAL FARM



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*Committed to excellence.*  
FROM HERE, IT'S POSSIBLE.

# Department of PLANT AND SOIL SCIENCE

## WELCOME



This September-October 2008 special issue of the Department of Plant and Soil Science newsletter is devoted to informing our alumni and friends about the great things that have been happening in PSS. As we begin a new academic year, this is a perfect time to review progress during the past year, and look forward to 2009. For those alumni who have not heard from us in a while, we also want to reconnect, and describe important changes and advances in the department.

It has been my privilege to serve as Department Chair for the past two years. We have the most dedicated faculty and staff anywhere. Their dedication to top-quality research, teaching, engagement, and student support is unequalled. Our alumni are a priceless resource of support and we wish to stay connected with you. We are excited about continuing to build for the future. If you wish to know more about our department, please contact me at (806) 742-2838 or [thomas.thompson@ttu.edu](mailto:thomas.thompson@ttu.edu).

Tom Thompson  
PSS Department Chair

## HIGHLIGHTS



- The Fiber and Biopolymer Research Institute (formerly the International Textile Center) was recently merged into PSS. The resulting combination in one department of expertise in cotton genetics/genomics, production, and fibers and textiles is unique among U.S. universities.
- Two field days were held at the Quaker Ave. Research Farm during August 2008. More than 150 people attended and learned about advances in crop biotechnology, irrigation, turfgrass, drought tolerant ornamentals and more.
- A team of PSS researchers received \$1 million from TTU to sequence the genomes of two cotton species. They will target gene regions that control cotton fiber quality.
- Our undergraduate Agronomy Club team won the National Agronomy Quiz Bowl Championship in New Orleans, LA.



National Champions!



## NEW PEOPLE



**Dr. Jennifer Moore Kucera** is an Asst. Professor of Soil and Environmental Microbiology. She joined PSS in August 2008 from Oregon St. University. Her research focus is Soil Microbial Ecology.



**Dr. Brent Trela** is an Asst. Professor of Enology. He joined PSS in September 2007 from UC-Davis and has a joint appointment with Texas AgriLife Extension.



**Amber Bates** is an Instructor of Horticulture while working on her PhD. Her dissertation title is "Increasing Yield and Oil content of Evening Primrose."



Scott Tuttle, Coordinator for Student Services, will work full-time to reach prospective high school and community college students. [scott.tuttle@ttu.edu](mailto:scott.tuttle@ttu.edu).



GETTING TO KNOW US...

## PSS PEOPLE

30 Faculty, 21 scientific and administrative staff, 100 undergraduates & 80 graduate students.

## PSS FACILITIES

Housed in five buildings on the TTU campus, Quaker Ave. & New Deal Farms (270 acres total), Horticulture Gardens and Greenhouses, and the Fiber & Biopolymer Research Institute.

## SOME NUMBERS

- Total endowment in 2008: \$8.3 Million
- Scholarships awarded 2007-08: \$56,000
- Endowed Chairs and Professorships: 5
- Grant funding for PSS (with FBRI) during fiscal year 2007: \$3.5 Million
- Ranking among TTU departments for research grant funding: 3rd.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

- B.S degrees in Horticultural & Turfgrass Sciences & in Environmental Crop and Soil Sciences.
- M.S. degrees in Crop Science, Entomology, Horticulture, and Soil Science.
- Ph.D. in Plant and Soil Science.
- Graduate Certificate programs in Crop Protection, Fibers and Textiles, Horticultural Landscape Management, and Soil Management. These certificates are available live and at a distance.

## RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Our research programs are built around three main themes: Biotechnology, Environmental Stewardship, and Sustainable Production Systems. To learn more about our research, visit our webpage: [www.pssc.ttu.edu/research/pssresearch.php](http://www.pssc.ttu.edu/research/pssresearch.php)

## FUTURE PLANS...

Our new strategic plan can be found at: <http://www.pssc.ttu.edu/strategicplan/PSSStrategicPlan.pdf>

## GOALS

- Grow student enrollment to 150 undergraduates and 85 graduate students.
- Increase scholarship endowment by \$1,000,000.
- Award more than \$100,000 in scholarships each year to PSS students.
- Raise \$2,500,000 toward the construction of a new building for PSS.



## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Let us hear from you! It means so much to us to know that our friends and alumni are thinking of us.
- Give! We rely on the generosity of friends and alumni for scholarships and other special initiatives. Current tax-deductible giving opportunities include:
  - Ellen B. Peffley Scholarship Fund: [http://www.pssc.ttu.edu/giving/peffley\\_scholarship.php](http://www.pssc.ttu.edu/giving/peffley_scholarship.php)
  - PSS Scholarship Fund: [http://www.pssc.ttu.edu/giving/PSS\\_scholarship.php](http://www.pssc.ttu.edu/giving/PSS_scholarship.php)

## MORE INFORMATION...

- To receive our bi-monthly newsletter, please call 806-742-2838 or email: [thomas.thompson@ttu.edu](mailto:thomas.thompson@ttu.edu).
- Find out the latest news and information about PSS at [www.pssc.ttu.edu](http://www.pssc.ttu.edu)
- Please come by our departmental office at the Plant Sciences building on campus in room 263. We will be glad to show you around.