

## FABI SHINES AT SASPP MEETING

The 2019 meeting of the Southern African Society for Plant Pathology (SASPP) took place on the West Coast, hosted by Stellenbosch University. The meeting boasted nine keynote speakers from institutions in five different countries. The diverse topics included bacterial and fungal taxonomy, biosecurity and quarantine issues and novel methods of disease management. The changing perception of plant health and disease management strategies was a topic highlighted by the plenary speakers, but that continued to emerge throughout the sessions.



Dr. Sandra Denman delivered the Ethyl M. Doidge Memorial Address, illustrating how plant pathologists are increasingly coming into contact with complex disease syndromes in which “pathobiomes”, rather than single pathogens, are involved. The

audience was captured by Prof. Arne Stensvand, who investigates chemical-free methods of controlling powdery mildew infections. Information technology (IT) and engineering are just two of the disciplines intersecting with plant pathology that are enhancing our understanding of complex systems and leading to improved control systems.

For many FABI postgraduate students, including Kira Lynn, Mandy Messal and Nam Pham, SASPP 2019 was their first conference. FABI was well-represented, with members delivering excellent scientific talks and posters. Two FABIans, Kira Lynn and Minette Havenga, were awarded second and third place, respectively, for best student oral presentation. Three of the top four posters also belonged to



FABLans: Patience Modiba, Raven Wienk and Juanita Hanneman. FABI also excelled in the social sphere, with Minette Havenga crowned the overall winner of the Mildenhall Stakes. This was an extraordinary Mildenhall Stakes as retired Prof. John Mildenhall recounted its history and announced that it would be his last SASPP attendance.

We look forward to 2021 when FABI will be hosting the 52nd SASPP meeting at the new Future Africa campus!