As CEPCB Founder and IIBG Director Natasha Raikhel is retiring this year, the Center expresses its deep gratitude for her vision, leadership, spirit and support over the years.

Pioneering solutions for hunger, disease and environmental sustainability
THE CENTER

In 2002, Natasha Raikhel led the initiative at UC Riverside to form the Center for Plant Cell Biology (CEPCEB) in the established Institute for Integrative Genome Biology (IIGB) and to develop from scratch instrumentation cores to support the research endeavors of the Center and the broader campus community. It was the Center’s vision to become a truly multi-disciplinary unit that embraced “systems-based” research – the melding of computational approaches and technological innovations with molecular and cellular biology. CEPCEB’s interdisciplinary initiatives have reached researchers across campus and have brought together members of biological science, engineering, computing and chemistry departments. Consequently, CEPCEB currently has a vibrant community of over 50 plant scientists who address fundamental questions of cell biology with an eye on translational research.

The Center for Plant Cell Biology Award Fund was established in 2002 to provide annual awards in recognition of research excellence in the areas of plant cell and molecular biology, genomics, bioengineering, and bioinformatics. The CEPCEB Award Fund annually sponsors awards at the postdoctoral, graduate student, undergraduate student, and high school student levels.

A prominent scientist is invited to present at the CEPCEB Award Ceremony annually. This seminar, titled the Distinguished Noel T. Keen Lecture, is named after an eminent plant pathologist and one of the first supporters and members of CEPCEB who brought considerable recognition to UC Riverside. CEPCEB is deeply grateful to Dr. Keen’s widow, Diane, for generously establishing an endowment to help support this special lecture series. In memory of Neil Campbell, Visiting Scholar in the Botany & Plant Sciences department for 15 years, and his contribution to biology education and research, CEPCEB also started presenting in 2005 the Neil Campbell CEPCEB Undergraduate Award for Outstanding Research. The Center is also indebted to Rochelle Campbell, Dr. Campbell’s widow, for her ongoing generous support of undergraduate student research and education. Research excellence awardees and Distinguished Lecturers since the Center’s inception are listed on the IIGB website.

Under CEPCEB’s current leader, Julia Bailey-Serres, CEPCEB is inspired to transfer its excitement of plant cell biology to a new generation of scientists who are extending research at UCR around the world.