

GU Welcomes Grow Pro Genetics To Campus

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Greenville University is pleased to announce a new partnership that will benefit [biology](#) students, put an underutilized facility on campus to work, and bring product development to Greenville.

Grow Pro Genetics, with a wheat breeding program based in Hamel, Illinois, will soon begin working in GU's greenhouse. Grow Pro staff focus on breeding soft red winter wheat.

Mutual Benefits

“Crop breeding involves very precise crossing of particular strains of a plant with other strains of that plant, in this case, wheat,” explains GU’s [Eric Nord](#), professor of biology and department chair. “Grow Pro has several hundreds of lines that they’re working on, trying to get the desirable traits from one line crossed into another line.”

After the crosses, Grow Pro will test thousands of offspring over several generations. Their use of the greenhouse on GU’s campus provides greater environmental control over the delicate breeding process during winter months.

Nord believes the collaboration will benefit students. He sees potential for hands-on demonstrations and [summer internship opportunities](#). Having students see innovation and applied biology in a corporate context is a bonus.

“Grow Pro is developing a product,” he says. “They use knowledge of biological processes to develop that product. Having that as a showcase for students is a great opportunity.”

Connection, Collaboration

“It’s really exciting how we can connect, collaborate, and provide opportunities for students,” says Greenville University President Suzanne Davis of the partnership.

That’s true especially when the collaboration involves innovation, one of GU’s core values.

[Agricultural](#) and biotechnology industries continue to evolve in an effort to meet growing demands around the world. Kenneth Davis, Grow Pro commercial director, believes the future is bright for creative problem solvers in today’s market: “By building on the connectivity of our increasingly globalized networks, the next generation of innovation may be closer than we think.”

Alumni Ties

Nord traces the beginning of the partnership back to conversations with GU alum [Eli Gravert](#) ’11, manager of Grow Pro’s research station in Hamel. An experienced researcher, Gravert frames his work as creating “a food-secure world through sharing knowledge and developing product techniques.” Before joining Grow Pro, Gravert managed field trials for global ag-tech leader Syngenta.

Grow Pro will lease half of GU's greenhouse space, an arrangement that will fund some capital improvements to the greenhouse. Members of GU's campus community can also expect to see tighter controls on greenhouse access.

For more information about this collaboration, contact eli.gravert@growprogenetics.com

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