

## **Barley Party 2024 Honorary Ring Recipient**

As part of the Faculty of Agriculture's ring tradition, the Alumni Association allows for an honorary ring to be presented each year. Honorary rings are awarded to individuals who do not meet the criteria to be eligible for a Barley Ring but who are extremely deserving of the honour. These individuals are ambassadors and supporters of the institution. They have made outstanding contributions to the AC community and truly depict the characteristics of a Faculty of Agriculture alum.

This year's recipient has been a staple on this campus since she first joined as an NSAC faculty member in 1999. Her devotion to advancing the institution, research, student well-being and the agriculture industry over the past 25 years is seemingly tireless. Along with her position as professor and researcher, this year's recipient has filled the role of Plant, Food & Environmental Sciences department chair, dean of the FAFU Overseas Education College, and most recently, as you are all well aware, acting dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and campus principal.

### **The 2024 honorary ring recipient is Dr. Gefu Wang-Pruski.**

A well-known potato scientist within North America, Dr. Wang-Pruski leads the Potato Molecular Biology and Genomics research lab and the Potato Consumer Research Initiative on campus. Her research interests involve potato genome organization, the potato's adaptability to environment, mechanisms of induced immunity to disease, genetic control of potato tuber qualities, genes involved in late blight resistance, vitamin C and antioxidants in potatoes, and potatoes as healthy food alternatives – literally and figuratively a mouthful! She is well-respected in the industry, particularly in the Maritime provinces, where potatoes are a vital part of the economy. In her own words, “there is a great need in the Maritime region for supporting this industry to lead to better economic growth, farm gate value and improved industrial performances.” Her work is a crucial part of that support.

Dr. Wang-Pruski has also been an indispensable resource for the Faculty of Agriculture's international relations. She has hosted many visiting scholars, and she sits on the coordinating committee for the faculty's articulation agreement with the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry university, of which she has been a vital component since its inception. Most notably, Dr. Wang-Pruski served as dean of FAFU's Overseas Education College from 2013 to 2016. She remains a student advisor for the International College and undoubtedly provides thoughtful and meaningful support to FAFU students, just as she does to Dalhousie students.

And support for students is truly where she shines. Dr. Wang-Pruski wants nothing more than for every student at the AC to succeed, academically and otherwise, and will do anything in her power to enable that success. She teaches several undergraduate and graduate level courses on campus, and has at different times served as an academic advisor for both levels of study. She has

participated in curriculum review processes and supervised more student research projects than could be listed here. And she makes herself available to all her students as much as humanly possible. Because although she is an inspiring academic and administrative leader, Dr. Wang-Pruski is also incredibly approachable. She is kind, welcoming and doesn't take herself too seriously. An active listener, she will make time for any questions or concerns, and forges true friendships with those around her. She regularly opens her home to her students, providing an especially welcoming environment to those whose homes are very far away.

And as if she wasn't busy enough already, on October 30, 2023, Dr. Wang-Pruski took on a one-year term as acting dean and principal for the Faculty of Agriculture. In this role she has proven herself tireless. On top of the day-to-day responsibilities of the position, she has made regular habit of attending as many student events as possible and meeting with DASA every month over lunch. She truly listens to the concerns and comments that are raised, and always makes sure to take action or report back. Even in this new role, Dr. Wang-Pruski puts students at ease, and they feel comfortable talking to her. She has been an invaluable partner to DASA and the entire student body.

Dr. Wang-Pruski's undeniable dedication to the well-being of this campus sets her apart, and leaves no doubt that she deserves to wear a barley ring on her finger. Gefu, we are thrilled to name you the 2024 Honorary Barley Ring recipient.