The University of Michigan Regents Communication

Request for Action

Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement

Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir

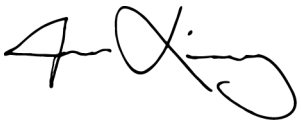
John Schiefelbein, Ph.D., professor of molecular, cellular and developmental biology in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, retired from active faculty status on December 31, 2026.

Professor Schiefelbein earned his B.S. degree from Iowa State University in 1982 and his PhD. degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1987. He conducted postdoctoral research at Michigan State University from 1987 to 1989. He joined the University of Michigan faculty as an assistant professor in 1989, and was promoted to associate professor in 1995, and professor in 2001.

Professor Schiefelbein's research program focused on the molecular mechanisms regulating plant development. He was a pioneer in establishing the plant root as a model for studying fundamental principles of development, including pattern formation, cell fate specification, and cellular differentiation. He is internationally recognized for defining the complex molecular pathway for root hair cell patterning and differentiation in the flowering plant Arabidopsis, including the regulatory proteins that generate multiple positive and negative transcriptional feedback loops within and between cells. These findings provide a textbook paradigm to explain how biological patterns arise within a field of equivalent cells. His laboratory also introduced innovative technological advances into the field of plant developmental biology, including mathematical modeling and high-throughput single-cell gene expression analyses. Professor Schiefelbein has been a gifted and dedicated mentor and educator of undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows. He served as the associate chair for curriculum from 1998-2002, and played a central role in the design and implementation of the restructured undergraduate biology curriculum upon reorganization of the Department of Biology into the Departments of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology. He also served as associate chair for graduate studies (2014-2017), where he led a major revision in the mentoring and early evaluation of graduate student training. Professor Schiefelbein was the recipient of the National Science Foundation Young Investigator Award in 1992-1997.

The Regents now salute this distinguished faculty member by naming **John Schiefelbein, professor emeritus of molecular, cellular and developmental biology.**

Respectfully submitted:



Jon Kinsey
Vice President and Secretary of the University

November 2026