



# CONFERENCE 2026

July 31, 2026 | Providence, RI, USA

*From Preservation to Innovation: Connecting  
Microbial Collections to Advance Science*



## AGENDA

- 8:15 am Breakfast, registration and badge pick-up
- 9:00 am Welcome, Introductions and Opening Remarks
- 9:15 am **USCCN 2.0 Overview: Structure, Aims, and Progress**  
*Dusti Gallagher, USCCN Project Manager*

### Session 1: Challenges & Opportunities with Microbial Collections

*Moderator: Adam Newman, Ginkgo Bioworks*

- 9:30 am **From Strains to Sequences: Why Culture Collections Are the Trust Layer for AI-Ready Biology**  
*Jonathan Jacobs, ATCC*
- 9:50 am **From Slants to Self-Driving Freezers: Scaling Culture Collections with Automated Storage and Data Management**  
*Ryan McCann, Ginkgo Bioworks*
- 10:10 am **Practical Lessons from Transforming Strain Collections into Dynamic Digital R&D Assets**  
*Thomas Roder, Abrinca Genomics*
- 10:30 am **Learning the Language of Bacterial Genomes with Genomic Language Models**  
*Maciej Wiatrak, University of Cambridge*
- 10:50 am Coffee Break & Networking

### Session 2: Collection Success Stories

*Moderator: Dusti Gallagher, USCCN*

- 11:20 am **Panel Discussion – How Collections Drive Measurable Scientific Impact**
- *Ruth Cheng, ATCC*
  - *Ryan McCann, Ginkgo Bioworks*
  - *Colin Maxwell, Ruby Bio*
- 12:20 pm Group Picture
- 12:30 pm Networking Lunch
- 1:30 pm **Keynote**  
**Rhizobial Genomics and Taxonomy: An Overview of the Canadian Collection of Agricultural Soils**  
*George diCenzo, Queen's University, 2025 Porter Award Winner*

## Session 3: Mobilizing Collaborations Across Collections

Moderator: Victoria Knight-Connoni, ATCC

- 2:15 pm     **Collaboration Dynamics of Culture Collections in the United States**  
*Kirk Borders, USDA-ARS*
- 2:35 pm     **European Culture Collections: Achieving Greater Impact Through Collaboration**  
*Matthew Ryan, CAB International*
- 2:55 pm     **Coffee Break & Networking**

## Session 4: Paving the Way for the Future

- 3:25 pm     **Session Introduction**  
*Dusti Gallagher, USCCN*
- 3:30 pm     **Community Thought Leaders Panel Discussion: The Value of Collaborations**  
*Moderator: Adam Newman, Ginkgo Bioworks*
- *Neha Potnis, Auburn University*
  - *Colin Maxwell, Ruby Bio & Kyria Boundy Mills, Phaff Yeast Collection, UC-Davis*
  - *Kirk Broders, USDA-ARS*
  - *Matthew Ryan, CABI*
  - *George diCenzo, Queen's University*
- 4:15 pm     **Guided Discussion & Q&A – The Future of USCCN**  
*Moderators: Rick Bennett and Kyria Boundy-Mills, USCCN Steering Committee*
- 5:00 pm     **Wrap-up & Announcements**  
*Dusti Gallagher, USCCN*
- 5:15 pm     **Networking Reception with Light Hors d'Oeuvres**
- 7:15 pm     **End of Conference**

## Post-Conference Survey

Thank you for attending the conference.

Please take a few moments to share your feedback by scanning the QR code and completing the survey.

Thank you!



## About USCCN

The United States Culture Collection Network (USCCN) is a Research Coordination Network supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation through grants #1534564 and #2124633.

The mission of the USCCN is to facilitate the safe and responsible utilization of microbial resources for research, education, industry, medicine, and agriculture for the betterment of humankind.