



Women in Plant Biology Committee American Society of Plant Biologists

Committee meeting May 6th, 2025

9:00 am Central Time US,

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://unl.zoom.us/j/91488688496?pwd=GYcKoKMb5tMeVo39G3bWrG625596hy.1&from=addon>

Meeting ID: 914 8868 8496

Passcode: 165242

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Present: Crispin Taylor, Sylvia Lee, Azam Noori, Chin-Mei Lee, Lesley Murphy, Andrew Foundree, Ruby Tiwari, Rebecca Roston

Absent: Balpreet Kaur, Rosana Melo

(GUESTS): N/A

Minutes

1. Welcome: 9:03 am
2. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting: (by email) unanimous by responders
3. Check in for mental health and support. Lesley is looking forward to healing from her surgery. Crispin is waiting outside a lobby firm. Andrew notes that China's reciprocation with soy tariffs is also a concern for plant science companies. Ruby had to transition to another job due to a funding crisis in her previous lab. She sees the effects on the earlier career groups. Rebecca agrees and notes concerns with the indirect costs on long-term science structure in the US. Chin-Mei notes she sees in the news that now 75% of scientists want to leave the US. Azam sees hiring freezes and is unclear about the future of her NSF grant.
4. Plant Biology of the future, childcare options (**most important agenda item, need to leave with a strategy**).
 - i) We voted to continue to provide at-site childcare based on the preferences of attendees and non-attendees of the 2024 meeting.
 - ii) Childcare costs are increasing, and the only solution is raising funds to help support childcare at the annual meetings.
 - iii) We proposed to help raise funds to continue offering high-quality childcare at the meeting. Progress on this has been slow because of the number of folks involved.

Updates: From Crispin: “We can [probably] create a single temporarily restricted fund that could be used either in rotation or as a collective holding place for folk that want to donate in support of childcare, travel awards, and SURF awards within a given year. In addition, donors who specifically want to support childcare and/or who want to have their donation permanently restricted (so we only use earnings on it) can donate to the existing Romanoff fund, which is used exclusively to support childcare. Finally, LSLC could petition the ASPB boards to direct some of the unrestricted funding that we have received (e.g., from donations in support of Pioneers) to provide additional support for childcare in MKE this year.” <https://aspb.org/support-aspb/>

Updates: From Judy Callis:

1. The Board of Trustees and the Board of Directors approved the creation of a Pioneer Subcommittee to over-see and assist with Pioneer-related activities. This committee needs to be constituted, so that will take some time.
2. The Board of Trustees and the Board of Directors approved the use of 2025 temporarily restricted funds to support childcare needs up to \$10,000. These are funds we already have. We are hoping this guarantee of funds will help ease some anxiety about support for the program.
3. The Board of Trustees and the Board of Directors approved the creation of a temporarily restricted fund (currently authorized for 3 meeting cycles) to support acute needs related to the annual meeting (such as travel awards and childcare) and to help support SURF program. It just opened, and will take awhile to be significant. It is live: <https://aspb.org/support-aspb/>.
4. We hope to advertise the above (new fund-#3) as well as the already existing Romanoff fund and the already existing Joe Varner Travel award fund in the near future.

Update: Judy Callis: To add to advertising, brief testimonials would be nice. This year, could there be some way to get feedback and some short statements on how great the service was, etc.?

Rebecca notes: We likely have these from the surveys done in the last two years. Jennifer had nice notes with these.

- At the last council meeting, we had talked about having the info available at registration. Slide at president’s opening address.
- Can we have something on the website? Do you need childcare? Would you be willing to support childcare?
- We can request support from Bayer next year (but they are cutting funding too).
- We can also request from other companies. Targeting exhibitors asking if families and willingness to support childcare? We could do this at the meeting. (Reverse table with a flyer). This could backfire if companies supported the Plant Bio meeting less.
- If we made a flyer, could we put it at the front desk? Yes, that seems fine. QR codes!
 - Get involved flyer? With QR codes!
 - Crispin will ask Sarah to start this.
 - WiPB can provide information for the flyer.
- **Quotes** – I couldn’t have attended without childcare. (2 votes)

- Graphs – Most Plant Bio attendees and ASPB members support childcare at meetings.
- **Comparison data** – Other meetings? One of the only societies with onsite childcare. The DEI aspect. This allows people to come who could not. (2 votes)
- Impact – Every dollar counts. We know the times are tough. If everyone gave a dollar, this would solve it. Crispin notes “a cup of coffee” not a dollar.
- Pay it forward?
- How far are we off? The problem is the money is invested. So the actual value changes each year. Every year, ASPB loses funds for the childcare services. Per Shoshana, actual sign-ups for Childcare are directly with Kiddie Corps, and we are looking for up-to-date information from them.
- 52 people who registered checked off they are interested in childcare. 8% of 2025 Plant Bio registrants are interested in childcare.
- Fundraising for United Way at Corteva every year has a check box on the donation page. The leaders try to compete.
 - Can we raise funds that would be possible to show support (without money) in addition to funds? Email Judy about this!!
- Have we ever raised funds from baby companies? Plant-based formulas?
 - No, great idea!
 - Once upon a farm is Jennifer Garner’s farm, and she is Lesley’s favorite actress.
 - McDonald’s and arctic apples?

Action item: Rebecca will put together and send to Crispin.

5. Plant Bio 2025 –

- i) Concurrent session update (Lesley & Balpreet, ~2 minutes)
 - i. All speakers committed, all have abstracts. Our “\$1k” plus Bayer means that we have all the Bayer attendees.
 - ii. Rebecca will request the program committee members attend.
- ii) Networking Workshop (Rebecca, ~5 minutes)
 - i. Volunteers?
 - Azam, Lesley, Andrew, Rebecca (Azam is conflict-dependent, yes).

6. Pioneer Awards (~30 seconds, tabled for next meeting)

- i) Everyone was theoretically responsible for contacting their person with an award notification. Updates!

- ii) Rosana – [Name redacted]
 - iii) Lesley – [Name redacted]
 - iv) Rebecca – Finishing awards, summary update from Shoshana
7. Women in History Month planning for the future. Notes regarding the potential for virtual sessions. (Rebecca, ~30 sec)
8. Any other Business? **Please feel free to add any suggested changes here to the agenda document!**
9. Adjournment [10:02]