American Society of Plant Biologists

Publications Committee
Meeting Minutes

July 20, 2026 | 12:00 pm EST | In-person in Ottawa, Ontario and via Zoom

Attendees
Reuben Peters (Chair), Ivan Baxter, Meng Chen, Hong Qiao,

Guests
Kent Chapman, Tessa Burch-Smith, Hong Ma, Gloria Muday, Pablo Manavella (*The Plant Cell),* Yunde Zhao (*Plant Physiology),* Crispin Taylor (CEO), Sarah Black (VP, Content & Communications), Shaun Duffy (Managing Editor), Laura Malaguerra (VP, Meetings & Membership), Zora Nazarei (Editorial Assistant), Jinnie Kim (OUP)

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks
The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed committee members and guests. Following introductions, the committee reviewed the meeting agenda, which included editorial board composition, journal publishing strategy, and discussion of emerging challenges affecting scholarly publishing.

2. Editorial Board Composition and Appointments
Editorial Board Diversity Review
The committee reviewed the current geographic and gender composition of the editorial boards for *Plant Physiology* and *The Plant Cell*. Discussion focused on ensuring editorial board membership reflects the evolving global plant science community and publication trends.

The committee noted increasing research output from countries including India, Korea, and Australia and discussed opportunities to strengthen representation from these regions in future editorial appointments. Members also acknowledged the challenges associated with recruiting leading researchers to serve as editors due to competing professional commitments.

Editorial Appointments
The committee reviewed and approved two editorial board nominations. The committee also reaffirmed support for implementing the quarterly editorial board appointment process discussed at previous meetings and agreed that upcoming vacancies should be reviewed through this framework.

3. Open Access Publishing and OMB Policy Discussion
The committee discussed the potential impact of the proposed Office of Management and Budget (OMB) policy changes that could restrict the payment of article processing charges through federally funded research grants.

Members reviewed the broader transition occurring across scholarly publishing toward open access models and considered the potential implications for ASPB's journals, authors, and long-term publishing sustainability.

Discussion topics included:

- Strategies to support authors if grant-funded publication charges become more difficult to recover.
- Potential membership models that incorporate publishing benefits.
- Opportunities to strengthen manuscript referral pathways between ASPB journals while maintaining editorial independence.
- The financial implications of continued growth in open access publishing and projected publication volume needed to maintain current revenue levels.

The committee agreed that a dedicated discussion on long-term open access strategy should be scheduled for a future meeting, supported by additional publishing and financial data.

4. Other Business
Plant Direct
The committee discussed the role of *Plant Direct* within ASPB's publications portfolio and noted concerns that the journal has not been regularly represented in Publications Committee discussions.

Staff provided an update that *Plant Direct* is currently undergoing strategic changes under its new Editor-in-Chief, Richard Haslam, and continues to operate through a joint Management Committee with the Society for Experimental Biology (SEB).

The committee agreed that regular updates on *Plant Direct* should be incorporated into future Publications Committee meetings to provide greater visibility into the journal's progress and strategic direction, and it was suggested that a Publications Committee member, preferably the Chair, participate in future Management Committee meetings.

Journal Publishing Services RFP
Staff provided an update on preparations for the upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) for journal publishing services.

The committee was informed that an external consultant has been engaged to guide the RFP development process and stakeholder engagement. Committee members discussed several strategic considerations that should be incorporated into the RFP, including:

- Referral relationships among ASPB journals.
- Membership models that include publishing benefits.
- Long-term publishing strategy in an evolving scholarly communications landscape.

A draft RFP is expected to be circulated for committee review following completion of the initial stakeholder consultation process.

5. Next Steps and Action Items

- Staff will share editorial board data highlighting publication activity from India, Korea, and Australia to inform future appointment discussions.
- Staff will prepare a condensed summary of institutional publishing agreements by geographic region and author coverage.
- The incoming *Plant Physiology* Editor-in-Chief will be briefed on the quarterly editorial appointment process and anticipated editorial board vacancies.
- Meeting notes and formal minutes will be distributed to the committee.
- Committee members will provide feedback to the publishing consultant on the draft RFP for journal publishing services.
- A future meeting will include a focused discussion on the strategic implications of open access publishing and potential author support models.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned following completion of the agenda at 1:30 pm Eastern.