COUNCIL
American Society of Plant Biologists

Committee meeting, Thursday, May 13, 2021; 11:00 am EST
Via Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/3012960900

AGENDA

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

☒	Callis, Judy	Chair, Immediate Past President
☐	Axtell, Mike	Mid-Atlantic Section Rep
☒	Brusslan, Judy	Western Section Rep
☒	Burch-Smith, Tessa	Chair, Science Policy Committee
☒	Chapman, Kent	Treasurer; chair, BoT
☒	Chapple, Clint	Elected member, by ballot
☒	Dehesh, Katie	President-elect
☐	Dharmasiri, Nihal	Southern Section Rep
☒	Farre, Eva	Chair WIPB
☒	Foyer, Christine	Elected member, by ballot and ASPBForward steering committee member
☒	Friedman, Erin	Chair, Education Committee
☒	Geitmann, Anja	Chair, International Committee
☐	Heaton, Emily	Environmental and Ecological Plant Physiology Section Rep
☒	Lee-Parsons, Carolyn	Northeastern Section Rep
☐	MacIntosh, Gustavo	Midwest Section Rep; Council-elected member, BoD
☒	Masalia, Rishi	ECPS Section Rep
☒	McCann, Maureen	President and ASPBForward steering committee member
☒	McIntyre, Katy	Chair, Ambassador Alliance and ASPBForward working group member
☒	Parrott, Wayne	Secretary, and Chair, Program Committee
☐	Rellán Álvarez, Rubén	México Section Rep
☒	Theg, Steve	Chair, Publications Committee
☒	Thornton, Leeann	PUI Section Rep
☒	Trujillo, Josh	Early Career Representative
☒	Vega-Sanchez, Miguel	Chair, Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC)
☒	Welti, Ruth	Chair, Membership Committee
☒	Taylor, Crispin	CEO (ex officio; non-voting)

STAFF/GUESTS:

☒ Clara Woodall (CFO)
☒ Jean Rosenberg (director of meetings and events)
☒ Sylvia Lee (executive and governance affairs administrator)
☒ Brian Larkins (Chair, Centennial Challenge and Legacy Society Leadership committees) first 20 min
☒ Debby Delmer (member, CCC and LSLC) first 20 min
☒ Katie Rogers (Community Engagement Administrator) last 15 min.

MEETING SUMMARY

1. **Opening:** Judy Callis opened the meeting at 11:05 EST. Crispin requested permission to record, approved by unanimous consent.

2. **Welcomes**: New Council member Ruth Welty was introduced; guests Brian Larkins and Debbie Delmer were introduced. Errors on the agenda were noted and are correct in this version.

3. **Approval of the agenda:** Judy C. requested approval of the agenda. Motion to approve corrected agenda was made by Gustavo, seconded by Judy B. and approved by unanimous consent.

4. **Approval of minutes from March 12, 2021 Meeting:** Not required, were approved by email vote prior to this meeting.

5. **Information item 1:** Centennial Challenge Update: Judy introduced this item and thanked members of the Centennial Challenge Committee (CCC) for their hard work on behalf of ASPB. Brian Larkins and Debby Delmer, chair and member of the CCC, respectively, were present and available to answer questions from Council. Brian gave an overview of the activities of this committee, presented history of fund-raising starting with the original Legacy Society, informed us of the inauguration of the $3 million Centennial Challenge, and described the ongoing Pioneer program. Brian remarked that the level of support by members is high, and he expressed his gratitude for this interest and the financial donations. The overall goal of this fundraising is to provide funds for professional development activities, not to support publications or other aspects of ASPB. The Legacy Society funds are invested with the intent to grow the investment portfolio, and only the ROI will be spent starting in 2024. And fundraising activities already initiated will "count" toward the $3 million goal of the Centennial Challenge. Estate donation information has now been provided and will be included in the Centennial Challenge as well.

   There was some discussion about deceased ASPB members for whom it has not been possible to identify trainees to lead their Pioneer effort, and Debby asked if we could identify individuals outside the US who would lead fundraising efforts on their behalf. Christine commented that there may be individuals in Europe. Brian expressed hope that some recognition event is possible at the annual meeting in 2024.

   Debby presented the "Giving Circles", which recognize specified levels of lifetime giving to ASPB and which are named for prominent plant biologist. She also thanked the staff who keep track of individuals' donations.

   All this information will be published in the May/June Newsletter and was included in the informational items for this meeting.
   After some discussion, it was decided not to publish the names of the Pioneers for whom fundraising is ongoing, because the candidate Pioneers ought not know how and whether donations in their honor reach 5K.

Crispin mentioned that the revised Gift Acceptance Policy approved by BoD is on the website.

6. **Discussion Item 1: Pending improvements to ASPB's budgeting process.** Kent gave an update on the changes to the budgeting process, especially those aspects that affect Committees and Sections most directly. These changes were described in a document sent to Council prior to the meeting. The most significant goal is to move the final budgeting process for the coming year from December (as in the recent past) to September. Kent noted that it will be difficult for Committees to meet the September deadline for their budget requests this year. The second proposed objective is to incorporate more dialog with the Committees and Sections in developing their respective budget requests, in part to allow for more coordination amongst groups and to provide opportunities for proposing new activities or expanding existing successful ones that might require additional resources. A third objective is to encourage committees to assess their current practices and programs to determine their relative value. With limited funding, the goal is to allow for innovation through assessing activities, so that worthwhile activities can be continued or expanded, but also so that less impactful activities could be terminated and replaced by others.

   Kent suggested that two activities that have been vulnerable to budgetary restrictions, the SURF program and travel awards, be evaluated in a holistic way to protect them from year-to-year variation in funding. He also stated that an anticipated outcome of these changes is to provide longer-term funding commitments for the more successful and impactful programs.

   Kent suggested that committees discuss future programs and budgetary requirements between Oct (the beginning of new committees) and March. Then ASPB staff and BoT will have time between April and September to develop budget proposals for final approval by the BoD.

   Council was asked for their opinion and thoughts. The proposed changes were met with generally positive responses, and there was a request that ASPB be more proactive in providing information to committees regarding funds available to them. With respect to the section funds, it was clarified that there were no changes planned to the current mechanism that has the Membership Committee approving section requests for up to $3,500 annually. More generally, Kent affirmed that there could be additional funds available, depending on the strength of the case made for the proposed additional funds and the extent of their alignment with ASPB missions. Nothing is off the table as long as it helps our members.

   There was some discussion regarding timing. Leeann was concerned that if the Membership Committee needs the final budget request by March, then the sections have to finalize their plans well in advance of March. This schedule would be particularly challenging for topical sections that hold their events in conjunction with Plant Biology conferences, because they would be budgeting for events not scheduled to take place for at least 15 months. It was agreed that Jean could provide information on annual meeting costs - room rental, housing, food and beverage and AV costs – as soon as they are available. It was also suggested that geographical sections that meet independently should also plan their budgets on a similar schedule. Kent expressed his willingness to continue the discussion regarding the budgetary process and timeline with anyone regarding their budgetary process.

Additional discussion focused on the mechanisms via which sections request funds and the possibility that they may need to be reevaluated to ensure both adequate accountability via the Membership Committee and a reasonable process from the sections' perspective.

In summary, the proposed changes were met with general approval; however the timing may not fit the needs of all sections/committees, and Kent anticipates further dialog with chairs/reps.

7. **Informational Item 2: Process for assigning ECRs to committees.** Judy introduced the proposed process and timeline for the appointment of ECRs to standing committees. The current process has been in place for a few years, and ECRs are identified on an ad hoc basis. The intent of this agenda item is to standardize the application and appointment procedures, to give committee chairs more advance notice of deadlines, to receive feedback on the proposed timeline for this specific year, to review the application, and to inform chairs of a new step in the process. This new step in the proposal is the last one: a final evaluation and approval of all appointments by the ASPB Nomination Committee (as specified in the Constitution) to ensure diversity in the appointments among the various committees. After Nomination Committee approval, the President-elect will communicate with the candidates.

   Council's comments on the document included notification of a typo on questions 9 and 10 and a question regarding the availability of "job descriptions" for the ECR positions. The latter is important, because, by prior agreement of Council, ECRs have an additional responsibility during their second year of committee service, which is service on the ECR Council. It was agreed that this additional responsibility should be made clear during the application process. No other changes were suggested.

8. **Information Item 3: New Plantae Community site.** Judy introduced Katie Rogers, who gave a brief update on the changes to the Plantae site. Katie described the two hubs: the Learning Hub (plantae.org) and the Online Community (community.plantae.org). The first has webinars, blog posts and curated content. The second is where members make accounts and share discussions. Katie R. mentioned that the ongoing goals are to increase synergies with ASPB, including increasing ASPB branding to draw Plantae viewers to ASPB. Katie provided a brief history of the community site and the cost savings that will be realized by the current switch from Breezio to BuddyBoss. During the migration, Katie and staff have revised content and made navigation improvements so that the content will be easier to find. For ASPB committees, it is now easier to have folders and organize content. Next goal is to connect Plantae users to ASPB's database more directly. Feedback is welcome, and Council will be informed when the database connection has been completed.

   Katie D. thanked Katie R. for all her efforts, but commented that the branding does not sufficiently emphasize ASPB's contributions to the Plantae site. While available for everyone, ASPB shoulders all of the costs. This important, but complex, topic will be addressed in future BoT/BoD meetings.

9. **Information Item 4: Update on Plant Biology 2021.** Wayne and Jean brought us up to date on the annual meeting, commenting on the complexities of identifying an appropriate platform, the pace of abstract submission (equivalent to last year's at this time), and registration. Significant additional (paid) registrants are expected immediately prior to closing of early bird pricing and before the conference begins. Group registration rates are available again, without the requirement that all participants be at the same institution. Sponsorships are going well. The response to requests for workshop proposals from the community was extensive, requiring that some be offered on Sunday, July 18. Other details of the program were shared, including that there will be a joint symposium with the BSA/Botany 2021; and Council members were urged to help promote registration by using Zoom backgrounds that can be downloaded from the conference site. There is a different vendor for posters. Two staff members, Katie R. and Teresa M., will be on-air moderators/MCs, and significant effort is being made to engage Ambassadors and Assistant Feature Editors as moderators. Every session will have closed captioning for those with hearing issues and/or for those for whom English is not their first language.

   Judy C., on behalf of Council, thanked Wayne and Jean and the Program Committee for their efforts.

   Gustavo referred Council to Tweets about the cost of the meeting and stated that ASPB should highlight all the extra value that it adds to the Plant Biology meeting, including closed captioning.

10. **Any Other Business:** There was no other business.

11. **List Action Items**
    1. Council members to review/read donation information and are encouraged to participate, especially if they have a mentor they wish to honor through the Pioneer Program.
    2. Kent to continue dialog with Sections and Committee chairs regarding budget requests.
    3. Judy C. to communicate noted changes to ECR application form to Shoshana.
    4. Katie D to initiate Plantae discussion with BoD/BoT
    5. Council members to get PB21 logos for their zoom screens, encourage registration and sponsorship and participation in annual meeting.
    6. If interested, inquire about large group rates.

12. **Adjournment at 12:14 EST.** Leeann moves to adjourn, Gustavo seconds, no objections.