

Membership Committee Notes

November 14, 2025

Attendance: Amin Khan, Crispin Taylor, Janeen Braynen, Taylor Scraggs, Shoshana Kronfeld, Colleen Doherty, Mike Mickelbart, Courtney Leisner, Marco Burger, Linda Palmer, Asha Kumari, Chamindika Siriwardana, Elena Pelech, Azam Nori, Laura Malaguerra

Next steps

- Shoshana: Collect additional feedback on Ambassador Bylaws proposal until Monday/Tuesday and send to Ambassadors for review
- Shoshana: Organize volunteers to form a working team for the membership workshop once program committee approval is received (after December 4-5 meeting)
- All Section Reps: Inform Shoshana of finalized meeting dates and locations for section meetings
- Shoshana: Schedule follow-up meeting in November/December to discuss membership committee's role in recruitment and retention (send doodle poll)
- Shoshana: Forward feedback about journal club idea to Sarah in the communications department

Summary

Meeting Notes and Agenda Updates

Shoshana announced that due to Aruna's absence due to an emergency, the meeting would be shorter, and item 4 on the agenda would likely be postponed to December. She reminded the section representatives to request funding for their meetings in the upcoming year and to confirm their meeting dates and locations to coordinate staff attendance, with the goal of having at least one staff person at each section meeting.

Shoshana reminded everyone of the need to respond when sent Hardship applications as quickly as possible or to let her know if you can not.

The conversation ended with Shoshana introducing herself and preparing for a round of introductions from other attendees.

ASPB Ambassador Program Restructuring

Shoshana discussed the restructuring of the Ambassador Program to focus on recruitment

The meeting focused on a proposed change to the Ambassador Program, shifting from automatic benefits to a point-based system rewarding recruitment and participation. Taylor expressed concerns about the competitive nature of the point system, suggesting a rubric-based approach instead. She suggested concerns about some Ambassadors not being active enough should be handled more by discussions directly with those Ambassadors. Discussed that recruitment was not the only task of the Ambassadors, but that we needed to work on that task more, as it has kind of diminished in the program in favor of other tasks like meeting, volunteering, and outreach. Azam questioned if the benefits would be available the year they did the work or after. Shoshana clarified that if they did things early in the year, those activities might count as points for this year, or they could roll them over to the next year. In general, a point or rubric system was favored by the group. The group discussed the need for ambassadors to meet bi-monthly to set goals and track progress.

Janeen, as representative of the Ambassadors, gave an explanation of their thoughts in developing the point system and the other changes. Taylor again expressed that a rubric might be better than a point system.

Shoshana outlined the next steps, including gathering feedback from the committee by Tuesday of the following week. Then the Ambassador Alliance would consider that feedback and decide if they want to make any changes to the proposal before sending it back to the Membership Committee to vote on. After the membership committee votes, it would go to the Board of Directors for approval.

Plant Biology 2026

Volunteers to organize the MemCom workshop once the proposal is accepted in early December. Only Taylor responded at the meeting. More volunteers will be requested at the next meeting or via email. Shoshana indicated that on the proposal, she was clearer about the setup needs, specifying a minimum of 10 round tables and 15 being preferable.

Shoshana also thanked several people for submitting other proposals for activities at Plant Biology 2026

ASPB Members-Only Journal Club

The group discussed a proposed members-only journal club activity for ASPB, with Taylor suggesting a model where members vote on topics and papers are assigned to match. Colleen expressed concerns about finding time for another journal club, while Azam supported the idea, particularly for students, noting it could help encourage reading and scientific discussion. Also, help teach students how to read scientific articles and discuss them even when they do not know everything about the topic.