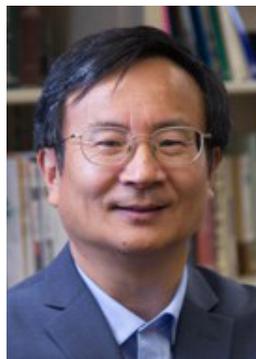




President-elect

(to serve as president 2022–2023)



Hong Ma

For nearly 100 years, the missions of ASPB have been to promote plant biology research and education, to disseminate research results through publications and conferences, and to support the community of plant biologists. ASPB has had numerous accomplishments, while also having faced many challenges, as our greater society makes great progresses with punctuated setbacks. Today, ASPB and our plant biology colleagues, along

with other members of the human society, once again have global challenges of food shortages, destruction of ecosystems, climate change, economic upheavals, and world-wide health crises. Furthermore, even though decades of great efforts to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion in the plant sciences and society more generally have made significant progress, so many recent tragic events have sharply focused our minds more than ever on the need to fight even harder against biases and bigotry. Nevertheless, the broad participation in recent demonstrations and the conviction of Derek Chauvin provide a ray of hope that sustained efforts can lead to greater change.

As a first generation immigrant and naturalized US citizen, I have benefited from the support of many friends and colleagues, while also having experienced and witnessed some of these biases and bigotry and sharing in the pain and anger they provoke. Throughout my career, I have worked hard to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion through mutual respect and understanding and supported the training of women and minority students and postdoctoral scientists. In addition to serving as advisors to students and postdocs, I was also previously the Director of the Cell and Developmental Biology Graduate Program at Penn State, and worked to expand the numbers of both faculty and students, including plant biologists and their trainees. If I am elected as president, a top priority will be to support and train plant biologists toward becoming a community with greater diversity, to amplify the voices of diverse members of our community, and to promote diversity in society leadership and society activities.

Currently I am a Professor of Biology and Huck Distinguished Research Professor of Plant Molecular Biology at The Pennsylvania State University. My lab has studied the molecular genetic basis of plant reproductive development, particularly anther/pollen development and meiosis; we are also interested in understanding phylogenetic relationships and evolution of angiosperms, particular for members of families with species that are important for agriculture and horticulture, including soybean and other legumes, cucumber and other Cucurbitaceae members, as well as apple, pear, strawberry and other Rosaceae.

My interests in plants started when I was in elementary school with exposure to major crops such as rice and soybean and many other cultivated or wild plants. After starting my undergraduate studies at the University of Science and Technology of China, I transferred to Temple University and completed my BA in Biology and Biochemistry, with undergraduate research in biochemistry and organic chemistry. My training in molecular genetic analyses was obtained through Ph.D. studies of gene regulation in yeast at MIT. During my Ph.D., the advances in plant molecular biology, especially the emergence of *Arabidopsis* as a model system for plant biology, attracted me to seek postdoctoral training under the guidance of Elliot Meyerowitz, through research on floral homeotic and heterotrimeric G protein genes.

In 1990, I started my first independent scientist position at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, continuing molecular genetic studies of floral and G protein genes. Eight years later, I moved to Penn State and became an associate professor, joining a much larger group of plant biologists at Penn State. This environment has provided many opportunities for collaboration and fostered my research in a new area, molecular evolution. Furthermore, the opportunities to work with and train students and postdocs, including women and minority students, made the professional experience at Penn State highly satisfying. From 2008 to 2016, I was Professor and Dean of the School of Life Sciences at Fudan University, Shanghai, focusing on increasing research quality, strengthening graduate student careers, and facilitating international exchange. In early 2017, I returned to Penn State as full-time Professor of Biology and the Huck Distinguished Research Professor of Plant Molecular Biology. In 2018, I was appointed as Associate Dean for Research and Innovation of the Eberly College of Science at Penn State for a term that will conclude at the end of 2021.

I have been a member of ASPB since 2000 and have served as a member of the ASPB Publications Committee since 2017. I have also served previously as an Associate Editor for *Plant Physiology*. In addition, I have been an author on a number of papers published in *Plant Physiology* or *The Plant Cell*, and I have also served as a reviewer for manuscripts submitted to these two journals. I consider these as valuable experiences that can be beneficial for responsibility of the president to support the society journals, as they navigate through the current time of great changes in scientific publishing under the leadership of the Editors-in-Chief.

During my career, I have been honored with the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship (2004-2005), the Faculty Scholar Medal in Life and Health Sciences at Penn State (2005), Distinguished Professor in Biology at Penn State (2008), and elected as a AAAS Fellow in 2010. These serve as reminders that I should do more to give back to the profession that has supported my career.

All my life, I have believed strongly in hard work and dedication to the common good. If I am elected, I will work hard for ASPB, for its members and the greater plant biology community, and to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Let's work together to achieve a more perfect society for all!