



Secretary-Elect

Candidate Statement

Judy Brusslan

I am honored to be nominated to become the ASPB Secretary-Elect. I am a professor at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) with an active lab for master's degree and undergraduate students. Our lab focuses on the relationship between the vegetative to reproductive transition and the subsequent gene expression changes that occur in older rosette leaves of *Arabidopsis*. I was fortunate to have been encouraged by two brilliant and supportive mentors as a young scientist. I received my PhD with Dr. Robert Haselkorn at the University of Chicago studying herbicide resistant D1 proteins in cyanobacteria; and I did postdoctoral research with Dr. Elaine Tobin at UCLA studying phytochrome and co-suppression. I have attended Plant Biology meetings for many years: as a postdoc and as a PUI faculty member. I currently serve as a Monitoring Editor for *Plant Physiology*, where I work with Associate Feature Editors and edit manuscript submissions related to leaf senescence. In addition, I have organized multiple ASPB Western Section Regional meetings, most recently in March 2024 at CSULB. Plant Biologists want to come together and share their science, and I work hard to provide this opportunity to all.

My top priority for the annual Plant Biology meeting would be to maintain research excellence and rigor. Topics change over the years, but the cutting-edge plenary and concurrent symposia with speakers who value clear communication remain constant.

My next priority is to find ways to increase inclusiveness. I am the Principal Investigator of the NIH-funded Bridges to the Doctorate Research Training program at CSULB, where I work with minoritized MS students who aim to earn a PhD. Many of these students feel like outsiders who do not belong in the research community. Additionally, many researchers come to the Plant Biology meeting by themselves and may not be from well-funded, well-connected labs. There are small changes that might help more people feel included. After all, it is the connections with other researchers that bring us back each year. Concurrent symposia organizers could invite attendees to dinner at a nearby restaurant to allow people with similar interests to interact in an informal setting. Encouraging people to visit posters outside their field might enliven poster sessions. Workshops that focus on techniques, such as dual-luciferase assays, would allow those with practical expertise to share tips (often a small tweak is the key to success). I am aware that the Plant Biology meetings are already packed, and I will work with the committee to reach consensus...when something is added, something else is taken away. Plant Biology meetings have been a valuable resource in my career, and I would be thrilled to take on this leadership role.

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