

2018 Election

American Society of Plant Biologists

Election Procedures: On the electronic ballot card, mark your choice of candidates for elected office.

President-elect

(to serve as president 2019–2020)



Laura Wayne

Laura Wayne, Oils Discovery Leader for Corteva Agriscience the Agriculture division of Dow Dupont, would bring to the ASPB leadership a fresh industry perspective from two multinational agricultural companies and a renewed focus on mentoring and representation from all levels and backgrounds. Laura believes that by uniting plant biotechnology and ecologically-conscious farming principles, we can create a more sustainable world. Through the ASPB community, we can highlight to consumers the societal benefits of our research and technology to increase public acceptance of science and agricultural biotechnology. Laura's research interest are in understanding the underlying mechanisms of how plants work and to develop useful products in plants; she operates at the interface between basic and applied plant science.

Laura received her Bachelor's degree with Honors from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF) in Biotechnology. Laura earned her Ph.D. in Molecular Plant Sciences from Washington State University (WSU), as well as an NIH Protein Biotechnology certificate. Her Ph.D. work was in John Browse's laboratory studying the electron supply to fatty acid desaturases and hydroxylase. This work revealed that this reductant supply is also required for male gametophyte development. Through the NIH Protein Biotechnology traineeship program, Laura was a summer intern at a small biotech startup company, Metabolix (now Yield10 Bioscience) and worked on producing biodegradable polyhydroxyalkanoates plastics in oilseed crops. She began working at Dow AgroSciences in Indianapolis in 2012 in the Output Traits program. There she created healthier vegetable oils in crops, such as DHA in canola oil and high oleic sunflower oil. While at Dow AgroSciences, Laura also worked on the crop protection platform, elucidating the enzyme targets for novel herbicides and developing new herbicide tolerant traits. Laura currently is relocating to Des Moines, IA (DuPont Pioneer site) and leading the Oils Discovery group, which focuses on enhancing oil composition and yield.

Laura's first involvement in ASPB was as an undergraduate student, when she attended several sectional and national ASPB meetings. She was awarded an ASPB Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF), and her research project developed into a senior thesis on characterizing guard-cell-specific genes in

Arabidopsis for conferring drought tolerance in plants. Through the SURF program, Laura joined ASPB and has remained an active member ever since. Over Laura's career moves, she has been involved with three different regional ASPB sections, helping to plan meetings and career development panels. At the national ASPB meetings, Laura volunteers as a résumé reviewer to help ready students for the job market and share valuable skills needed for industry careers. Laura has served on the Women in Plant Biology (WIPB) committee of ASPB since 2014 and took an active role when the Chair was unavailable by filling in for a Council meeting, inviting guest speakers, and hosting the committee's workshop at the annual meeting. In 2017, she was appointed Chair of the WIPB committee. Currently, Laura is working to update and expand ASPB's compendium of the biographies of prominent women plant biologists to inspire others and give recognition to our pioneers. The WIPB committee and the Minority Affairs Committee are jointly planning a workshop on leadership development for the 2018 conference.

Throughout Laura's career, she has been enthusiastic about sharing her passion for plant biology and science with others by inspiring young women to pursue STEM careers. For the past five years she has served as a mentor with Starfish Initiative, an Indianapolis-based mentoring program that prepares economically disadvantaged high school students for college. Laura's current high school student is a senior and will be studying biology at Indiana University in the fall. She has trained and supervised two summer interns while at Dow AgroSciences and helped them find jobs. She is also involved in Dow AgroSciences Science Ambassadors outreach program and has judged at the Indiana Science and Engineering Fair, been a career panelist for student tour groups, and demonstrated science activities at community events encouraging kids to become excited about STEM. Laura recognizes the impact her mentors have had on her career, and she strives to do the same for others.

Laura was named Rising Star at the 2016 Indiana Women & Hi Tech Leading Light Awards for her "remarkable ability to be a leader, to get things done, to network and collaborate with no boundaries of position or background and to have fun!" Laura's energy, drive, and enthusiasm have led to the creation of new technology, intellectual property, and research collaborations inside and outside of Corteva Agriscience. She would like to channel her passion for plant biology to lead ASPB into a more collaborative, inclusive, and innovative organization reaching all levels and backgrounds. She would advocate for increasing graduate student and post-doc visibility and representation. Laura would strive to increase ASPB's public spotlight on how plant biology and agricultural biotechnology can benefit consumers and our environment through innovative use of social media and enhancing communication between public and private sectors.