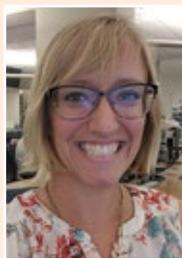




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Nominations  
Opening Soon!

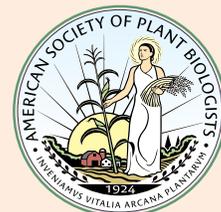


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# ASPB News



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PLANT BIOLOGISTS

## Ambassa-More, Please! Announcing the Newly Enhanced ASPB Ambassador Program

BY STEPHANIE KLEIN, ASPB Ambassador and Membership Committee, RISHI R. MASALIA, ASPB Ambassador and Membership Committee, KEN KORTH, Membership Committee, and JILL DEIKMAN, Chair of the Membership Committee

**T**he ASPB Ambassador Program was established in 2006 to involve students and postdocs in communicating ASPB's mission to academic and industry communities and to the general public. ASPB ambassadors have since become some of the

Society's most active members. They engage their campus communities in outreach activities, represent ASPB at section conferences, and contribute articles to the *ASPB News*. Most importantly, ASPB ambassadors have

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Left to right: ASPB ambassadors Rishi Masalia, Stephanie Klein, Nathan Harlan, and Kathryn McIntyre meeting up at Plant Biology 2018 in Montreal.

### President's Letter

## #ASPBForward: Where We Are Going

BY ROB LAST  
Michigan State University



**O**ver the past year, ASPB continued a history of nearly 100 years of growth and change, and I have learned much about this great organization of people. The size and scope of activities and

diverse passions of members, staff, and affiliates made it difficult to choose one topic for this first letter, so I highlight ways that ASPB is working and planning efforts to serve members. First, some context.

It is exciting to make the transition from president-elect to president. My president-elect year provided opportunities to learn

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## ASPB Council

Council members highlighted in blue also serve on the Board of Directors.

<b>President</b>	Rob Last
<b>Immediate Past President; Chair</b>	Harry Klee
<b>President-elect</b>	Judy Callis
<b>Secretary</b>	Andrew Bent
<b>Treasurer; Chair, Board of Trustees</b>	Rick Vierstra
<b>Elected Members</b>	Christine Foyer Maureen McCann
<b>Chair, Membership Committee</b>	Jill Deikman
<b>Chair, Minority Affairs Committee</b>	Gustavo MacIntosh
<b>Chair, Publications Committee</b>	Neil E. Olszewski
<b>Chair, Women in Plant Biology Committee</b>	Laura Wayne
<b>Chair, Education Committee</b>	Sarah Wyatt
<b>Chair, International Committee</b>	Anja Geitman
<b>Chair, Science Policy Committee</b>	Nathan Springer
<b>Sectional Representatives</b>	
<b>Mid-Atlantic Section</b>	Hua Lu
<b>Midwestern Section</b>	Gustavo MacIntosh
<b>Northeastern Section</b>	Carolyn Lee-Parsons
<b>Southern Section</b>	Ashlee McCaskill
<b>Western Section</b>	Kulvinder Gill
<b>Environmental and Ecological Plant Physiology Section</b>	Andy VanLoocke
<b>Primarily Undergraduate Institutions Section</b>	Leeann Thornton

## ASPB Staff

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<b>Legislative and public affairs director</b>	Tyrone Spady, tspady@aspb.org
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The *ASPB News* is distributed to all ASPB members and is also available online. It is published six times annually in odd-numbered months. Its purposes are to keep membership informed of ASPB activities and to reinforce the value of membership. The *ASPB News* is edited and produced by ASPB staff from material provided by members and other interested parties.

Copy deadline is the 5th day of the preceding even-numbered month (for example, April 5 for May/June publication).

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**PRESIDENT'S LETTER**  
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about the organization through service on the meeting-organizing Program Committee, as well as the Council and the Board of Directors. There also were opportunities to get involved in other activities near to my heart. One example is interacting with the Publications Committee, on which I served in the 1990s. Making appointments to the governance and awards committees allowed me to work with committee chairs, and it was gratifying to experience the enthusiastic responses from those invited to participate. More than a year of intensive exposure to the inner workings of ASPB revealed changes that are propelling organizational evolution, and this letter highlights two areas: the annual Plant Biology meetings and the Society's electronic media presence.

**Plant Biology Meetings**

The annual Plant Biology conference is a wonderful example of how a long-lived science society has evolved to meet the needs of community members while promoting scientific excellence, education, and sound policy. Attendees experience a tremendous breadth of poster topics from presenters ranging in age from their late teens to their 90s. There are inspiring talks from speakers selected for major and concurrent symposia. It is noteworthy that the majority of talks are selected from submitted abstracts covering the full range of scientific and educational topics pursued by attendees. A bit of advice: if you'd like the chance for a speaking opportunity at Plant Biology 2019, be sure to

submit your abstract before the first deadline. Oh, and by the way, there were more than 1,600 attendees at Plant Biology 2018 in Montreal!

The research described at our annual meetings has always been a prime motivator for me to attend; however, the most noticeable changes since I attended my first American Society of Plant Physiologists annual meeting in the early 1990s are the activities that promote professional development and networking across disciplines, geographies, and career paths. Indeed, the Program Committee, staff, and leadership have a satisfying challenge in accommodating the demand for satellite meetings, workshops, networking events, and one-on-one mentoring activities at the annual meetings. This is an area in which the staff and volunteers provide great leadership.

In Montreal, the Plantae Pavilion and ASPB booth served as venues for dozens of round-table discussions, networking events, and social media-oriented activities. In addition to serving the needs of attendees, these happenings are testing grounds for events that could grow into new ASPB activities, committees, collaborations, and—most exciting of all—events that help early career participants find niches and grow into long-term members.

**Electronic Media Presence**

Although conferences, newsletters, *Signal* emails, and the ASPB website continue as mainstream ways to engage the community, the value of the Plantae digital ecosystem (<https://plantae.org/>) and social media has been increasing exponentially. The

2017–2018 academic year saw a step-change increase in Plantae content: it now serves as a gathering place for the digital output of the Convirion Scholars and Plantae Fellows programs, as well as hosting the What We're Reading blogs, employment opportunities, and a portal to the TapRoot podcast.

If you have not looked at Plantae in recent months, I urge you to do so soon and regularly. You can access on-demand video content on topics of broad appeal, learn about data management and analysis, tune up your communication approaches, and find out about phenomics and space biology. Looking for a topic for a journal club or ideas to modernize an upcoming lecture? What We're Reading (<https://plantae.org/research/wwrtw/>) and *Plant Physiology News and Views* (formerly Commentaries; [http://www.plantphysiol.org/content/by/section/News and Views](http://www.plantphysiol.org/content/by/section/News%20and%20Views)) provide digestible summaries of diverse papers in our disciplines. This content educates us and provides scholars at all career stages with chances to hone their communication craft and be recognized by others in the community. Our substantial investment in Plantae is yielding interest and creating buzz.

After learning of my impending term in ASPB leadership, I dusted off a moribund Twitter account (@biokid001) to discover how this platform is used by our community of members, authors, and conference attendees. This continues to be an eye-opening—and time-consuming—avocation. ASPB staff and community members promote educational and career development activities, advertise our journals'

content, and let the community know about the efforts and broad recognition of our members. The Twitter community at the Montreal conference was remarkably active (#plantbio18; for stats and some tweets, see <https://tinyurl.com/ybuffon5>), and this activity allowed a broad group of scientists and citizens across the world to know what they were missing and why they should come to Plant Biology 2019 in San Jose, California.

**Other Efforts Toward the Future**

ASPB needs to strengthen our impact for a broad group of people, including early career and private-sector members, and there are plenty of changes afoot this year. For example, the Convirion Corporation increased support for the Convirion Scholars program, and the next class will grow from 20 in 2017–2018 to 43 in 2018–2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/yd7dav89>). Leadership responded to a recent Membership Committee recommendation to double the size and increase the activities of the 12-year-old Ambassador Program (<https://tinyurl.com/yb6sqvqky>). The details for 2019 can be found on page 1 and at <https://tinyurl.com/yah8986y>.

Discussion at the ASPB Town Hall on the last afternoon of Plant Biology 2018 and social media discussion before and after the meeting provided ideas for how to make the Society more inclusive and responsive. We are developing mechanisms for including early career scientists as members of the committees at the heart of our Society (see page 8 and <https://aspb.org/about/committees/>). Finally, we will work to be an

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**PRESIDENT'S LETTER**  
*continued from page 3*

increasingly welcoming place for all community members, regardless of age, career path, ethnicity, gender identification, or sexual orientation; this is inherently the right thing to do and a path to a healthy future for our community.

If you have suggestions, tag tweets #aspbforward (and tag @biokid001 to get my attention), send an email, volunteer to write a blog, do a training video, apply to be an ambassador, and encourage your friends to join and participate in ASPB (<https://aspb.org/membership/>). ■



## Let's Nominate!

**T**he Call for Nominations for ASPB Board of Director positions and the 2019 ASPB Awards is fast approaching. An email message will be sent out to members on January 4, 2019; nominations are due by Wednesday, February 13, 2019.

ASPB relies on a number of dedicated individuals

who commit their time and energy to leading the Society. Members will be nominating and then voting for a president-elect and an elected member of the Board of Directors. We need nominees to consider for these positions, so do please participate in the process and let your voice be heard by submitting a nomination at

<http://excom.aspb.org/>. A list of prior presidents who have served ASPB can be viewed at <http://aspb.org/about/past-presidents/>.

The Call for Nominations will open soon, so please join your colleagues and nominate! ■

**AMBASSA-MORE, PLEASE!**  
*continued from page 1*

served the vital role of providing a voice for early career members in the Society, often lending input on key issues.

To further strengthen this program, the Membership Committee—with input from current ambassadors and other early career members—felt that the Ambassador Program should be restructured to offer more leadership training and career development opportunities for this committed group of members. We are happy to announce that a proposal to enhance the Ambassador Program was approved by the ASPB Board of Directors for

a one-year trial beginning in January 2019.

The new program is designed to enhance the ambassador experience with leadership and science communication training activities and networking opportunities, all while maintaining the original purpose of engagement with other plant scientists to share ASPB's mission. The Ambassador Program is open to members of ASPB who are students or post-docs or who work in industry. Ambassadors must complete at least two activities to encourage people to engage with ASPB or to communicate the importance of plant sciences. Alternatively, service on a standing ASPB committee or on the Ambassador

Alliance (see below) will fulfill this contribution requirement. Ambassadors will have access to leadership training modules, networking opportunities, and other resources available on Plantae. To facilitate these aims, discounts on section and national meetings will be provided, and an annual Ambassador of the Year will be recognized.

The Ambassador Program will now have its own governing body, the Ambassador Alliance, to oversee its main operations. The Ambassador Alliance will consist of a chair, vice chair, secretary, Membership Committee representative, and outgoing chair. These positions will be elected by the ambassadors. The

Ambassador Program chair will also sit on the ASPB Council as a nonvoting representative.

Current ambassadors will continue in the new program, and applications are now being accepted for additional ambassadors. Candidates must be a current ASPB member and complete the application available online (<https://aspb.org/membership/aspb-ambassador-program/>) by January 15, 2019. Applications will be reviewed, and new ambassadors selected, by the Ambassador Alliance together with the Membership Committee.

Thanks to the entire Membership Committee and ASPB Member Services staff for developing this proposal. ■

# ASPB Officers and Committee Members Assume Posts for 2018–2019

Listed below are governance committee members for the current year. The year in which each committee member's term ends is indicated in parentheses. Please note that ASPB will be appointing early career researchers to most governance committees during the current year; see page 8 for more details on this initiative.

## Board of Directors

Judy Callis (2020), *chair, president-elect*  
Rob Last (2019), *president*  
Andrew Bent (2019), *secretary*  
Rick Vierstra (2021), *treasurer*  
Maureen McCann (2019), *elected member*  
Christine Foyer (2021), *elected member*  
Crispin Taylor, CEO (*nonvoting*)

## Board of Trustees

Rick Vierstra (2020), *chair, treasurer*  
Kathy Osteryoung (2019)  
Julia Bailey-Serres (2021)  
Kent Chapman (2022)  
Crispin Taylor, CEO (*nonvoting*)

## Constitution and Bylaws

Ken Keegstra (2021), *chair*  
Peggy Lemaux (2020)  
Bonnie Bartel (2021)

## Council

Harry Klee (2019), *chair, immediate past president*  
Rob Last (2020), *president*  
Judy Callis (2021), *president-elect*  
Andrew Bent (2019), *secretary*  
Rick Vierstra (2020), *treasurer; chair, Board of Trustees*  
Maureen McCann (2019), *elected member*  
Jill Deikman (2019), *chair, Membership Committee*  
Neil E. Olszewski (2019), *chair, Publications Committee*  
Sarah Wyatt (2019), *chair, Education Committee*

Gustavo MacIntosh (2020), *chair, Minority Affairs Committee*  
Nathan Springer (2020), *chair, Science Policy Committee*  
Laura Wayne (2020), *chair, Women in Plant Biology Committee*  
Christine Foyer (2021), *elected member*  
Anja Geitman (2021), *chair, International Committee*  
Hua Lu (2019), *Mid-Atlantic Section representative*  
Gustavo MacIntosh (2020), *Midwestern Section representative*  
Ashlee McCaskill (2020), *Southern Section representative*  
Kulvinder Gill (2020), *Western Section representative*  
Carolyn Lee-Parsons (2021), *Northeastern Section representative*  
Andy VanLoocke (2020), *Environmental and Ecological Plant Physiology Section representative*  
Leeann Thornton (2020), *Primarily Undergraduate Institutions Section representative*  
Crispin Taylor, CEO (*nonvoting*)

## Education Committee

Sarah Wyatt (2019), *chair*  
Valerie Haywood (2019)  
Susan Bush (2021)  
Estelle Hrabak (2021)  
MariaElena Zavala (2021)  
Erin Friedman (2022)  
Joseph Jez (2022)  
Tara Phelps-Durr (2022)

## International Committee

Anja Geitman (2021), *chair*  
Kranthi Mandadi (2019)  
Bijay Singh (2019)  
Jurandir Magalhaes (2020)  
Zuhua He (2021)  
Rubén Rellán Álvarez (2021)

## Membership Committee

Jill Deikman (2019), *chair*  
Rishi Masalia (2020), *postdoc member*  
Stephanie Klein (2019), *graduate student member*  
Catharina Coenen (2019)  
Ken Korth (2019)  
Hua Lu (2019), *ex officio*  
Gustavo MacIntosh (2020), *ex officio*  
Kulvinder Gill (2020), *ex officio*  
Ashlee McCaskill (2020), *ex officio*  
Leeann Thornton (2020), *ex officio*  
Andy VanLoocke (2020), *ex officio*  
Carolyn Lee-Parsons (2021), *ex officio*

## Minority Affairs Committee

Gustavo MacIntosh (2020), *chair*  
Savithamma Dinesh-Kumar (2019)  
Terri Long (2019)  
Miguel Vega-Sanchez (2019)  
Thelma Madzima (2020)  
Neelima Sinha (2020)  
Cris Argueso (2021)  
Sona Pandey (2021)

## Nominating Committee

Judy Callis (2021), *chair, president-elect*  
Rob Last (2020), *president*  
Harry Klee (2019), *immediate past president*

## Program Committee

Andrew Bent (2020), *chair, secretary*  
Judy Callis (2019), *president-elect*  
Wayne Parrot (2019), *secretary-elect*  
Phil Taylor (2019)  
Gilles Basset (2020)  
Stacey Harmer (2021)  
Shinhan Shiu (2022)

## Publications Committee

Neil E. Olszewski (2019), *chair*  
Katayoon (Katie) Dehesh (2019)  
Steve Theg (2021)  
Hong Ma (2022)  
Pamela J. Hines (2023)

## Science Policy Committee

Nathan Springer (2020), *chair*  
Harry Klee (2019), *immediate past president*  
Jim Carrington (2019)  
Shandrea Stallworth (2019), *early career representative*  
Neal Stewart (2019)  
Jeffrey Chen (2021)  
Scott Jackson (2022)  
Carolyn Lawrence-Dill (2022)

## Women in Plant Biology Committee

Laura Wayne (2020), *chair*  
Sreekala Chellamma (2019)  
Kelly Marie Gillespie (2020)  
Grace Miller (2020)  
Eva Farre (2021)  
Li Tian (2021) ■

# 2018–2019 Awards Committees

Listed below are awards committee members for the current year. The year in which each committee member's term ends is indicated in parentheses.

## **Adolph E. Gude, Jr. Award**

Julia Bailey-Serres (2022), *chair*  
Joe L. Key (2019), *past winner*  
Wendy Boss (2022)  
Joseph Hirschberg (2025)  
Sharlene Weatherwax (2025)

## **ASPB Innovation Prize for Agricultural Technology**

Chris Somerville (four award cycles), *chair*  
David Fischhoff (two award cycles)  
Toni Kutchan (three award cycles)  
Jane Langsdale (three award cycles)  
Rodrigo Sarria (two award cycles)

## **Charles Albert Shull Award**

Kris Niyogi (2021), *chair*  
Nathan Springer (2019), *past winner*  
Peggy Ozias Akins (2019)  
Patricia Bedinger (2020)

## **Charles Reid Barnes Life Membership Award**

Bill Lucas (2019), *chair*  
Deborah Delmer (2019), *past winner*  
Jane Shen-Miller (2019), *past winner*  
Karen Koch (2019)

Dean DellaPenna (2020)

## **Enid MacRobbie Corresponding Membership Award**

Mondher Bouzayen (2021), *chair*  
Renate Scheibe (2019)  
Alejandra Covarrubias (2020)  
Wataru Sakamoto (2020)  
Jian-Kang Zhu (2020)

## **Early Career Award**

R. Keith Slotkin (2020), *chair*  
Gaurav Moghe (2019), *past winner*  
Hiroshi Maeda (2020)  
Lucia Strader (2020)

## **Eric E. Conn Young Investigator Award**

Danny Schnell (2021), *chair*  
Christophe Maurel (2019)  
Caren Chang (2021)  
Laurie Smith (2021)

## **Excellence in Education Award**

MariaElena Zavala (2019), *chair*  
Marian D. Quain (2019), *past winner*  
Yan Lu (2021)

## **Fellow of ASPB Award**

Eran Pichersky (2020), *chair*  
Sheila McCormick (2019)  
Ed Cahoon (2020)  
Neelima Sinha (2021)

## **Martin Gibbs Medal**

Richard Dixon (2021), *chair*  
Ralph Bock (2019), *past winner*  
Maureen McCann (2021)  
Sue Rhee (2021)

## **Stephen Hales Prize**

Alex Webb (2019), *chair*  
Mary Lou Guerinot (2019), *past winner*  
Natalie Dudareva (2019)  
Harkamal Walia (2019)

## **Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship**

Adán Colón-Carmona (2021), *chair*  
Jon Monroe (2021)  
Erich Grotewold (2022)  
Amy Marshall-Colon (2022)  
Chris Wolverton (2022) ■

## You Could Be Missing Out on Critical Updates

ASPB offers a variety of email options to help you stay up-to-date on the latest meetings and networking events, awards and grant opportunities, job alerts, policy actions, research summaries, and much more.

Please take a moment to follow the instructions at <https://tinyurl.com/yakpn4k5> and update your email subscriptions with ASPB. This will help us make sure we send you the types of communications you want!

ASPB is committed to safeguarding personal and sensitive data in line with all applicable laws concerning the protection of personal information, including the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation (<https://tinyurl.com/odvcvq8>). Please see our terms and privacy policy (<https://tinyurl.com/ycphd3fm>) for more information.

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact ASPB member services manager Shoshana Kronfeld ([shoshana@aspb.org](mailto:shoshana@aspb.org)).

# 2019 ASPB Awards Nominations Opening Soon!

## The Time to Recognize and Honor Excellence Among Our Fellow Plant Scientists Is Near

**T**he 2019 Call for Award Nominations will be sent to ASPB members on January 4, 2019, and nominations will be due by Wednesday, February 20. ASPB encourages you to participate in the 2019 awards program by nominating highly deserving individuals. Please watch for the Call for Nominations in your email inbox, on our website, and via social media. In the meantime, please visit ASPB's awards pages (<http://www.aspb.org/awards-funding/aspb-awards/>) so that you can see who among your colleagues has received these awards in the past and determine who might be most deserving in the future.

All that is required to make a nomination for ASPB's awards is a one- to two-page letter of nomination and a detailed CV of the nominee. However, nomination committees may opt to go back to the nominator to ask for additional information if they deem it necessary.

Nominations should be submitted electronically as a single PDF via <https://awards.aspb.org> beginning January 4, 2019. The names of the 2019 award recipients will be announced in mid-April via social media and email broadcast to ASPB members, and the awards themselves will be presented during Plant Biology 2019 in San Jose, California.

### Awards to Be Given in 2019

#### Adolph E. Gude, Jr. Award

This monetary award honors the Gude family, who made possible the establishment of the Gude Plant Science Center, ASPB's headquarters. The award, established by the Society and first given in 1983, is to be made triennially to a scientist or layperson in recognition of outstanding service to the science of plant biology. Membership in the Society is not a requirement for the award.

#### ASPB Innovation Prize for Agricultural Technology

This prize was inaugurated in 2015 to recognize the outstanding work of industry scientists in companies of all sizes who translate discovery research into real-world outcomes that benefit agriculture. The award additionally acts as a vehicle to increase the awareness of the highest-quality science performed by industry scientists, whether or not they are members of the Society upon nomination, and showcases the opportunities and rewards of this career path. The Innovation Prize, which is made biennially, is a monetary award that also provides a one-year membership in the Society.

#### Charles Albert Shull Award

This award was initiated in 1971 by the Society to honor Dr. Charles A. Shull, whose personal interest and support were largely

responsible for the founding and early growth of the Society. It is a monetary award made annually for outstanding investigations in the field of plant biology by a member who is generally under 45 years of age on January 1 of the year of presentation or is fewer than 10 years from the granting of the doctoral degree. Breaks in careers will be considered when addressing the age limit of this award. The recipient is invited to address the Society at the annual meeting the following year.

#### Charles Reid Barnes Life Membership Award

This award was established in 1925 at the first annual meeting of the Society through the generosity of Dr. Charles A. Shull. It honors Dr. Charles Reid Barnes, the first professor of plant physiology at the University of Chicago. It is an annual award for meritorious work in plant biology; it provides a life membership in the Society to an individual who is at least 60 years old. Membership is a requirement for the award, and, if appropriate, every fifth award should be made to an outstanding plant biologist from outside the United States.

#### Early Career Award

The Society's executive committee instituted the Early Career Award in 2005 to recognize outstanding research by scientists at the beginning of their careers. This award is a monetary award

made annually for exceptionally creative, independent contributions by an individual, whether or not a member of the Society, who is generally not more than seven years post-PhD on January 1 of the year of the presentation. Breaks in careers will be considered when addressing the time limit of this award.

#### Enid MacRobbie Corresponding Membership Award

This honor, initially given in 1932 and renamed in 2018 to recognize Enid MacRobbie's many contributions to plant science research, provides life membership and Society publications to distinguished plant biologists from outside the United States in recognition of their contributions to ASPB and to plant biology. The honor is conferred by election on the annual ballot. The committee selects no more than three candidates, and these are placed on the ballot for approval of corresponding membership by majority vote. The president notifies successful candidates of their election. Election of a corresponding member is to be considered each year and held if warranted, provided the election would not increase the number of corresponding members beyond 2% of the dues-paying membership. ASPB membership is a requirement for this award.

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# New Positions for Early Career Professionals on ASPB Committees

BY JUDY CALLIS, President-Elect, @Judy\_Callis, JILL DEIKMAN, Membership Committee Chair, @JillDeikman, and ROB LAST, President, @biokid001

**A**SPB strives to be an inclusive professional organization, seeking input from and providing training opportunities for members across the world and at all career stages. ASPB currently involves early career professionals in two standing committees—Membership and Science Policy. Feedback at the Plant Biology 2018 Town Hall, as well as through social media and direct conversation between members and leadership, led the committee chairs and leadership to propose expansion of early career professionals' participation

in ASPB committees. We are happy to report that the ASPB Board of Directors approved a two-year trial for a program to do so.

The Education, International, Minority Affairs, Program, Publications, and Women in Plant Biology Committees each will appoint an early career professional, defined as an ASPB member in good standing no more than eight years since beginning graduate studies. Each would serve up to two consecutive years. The chair of the Ambassador Program will become a non-voting member of

the ASPB Council, which will allow early career professionals to have representation on the Council.

A broad call for self-nominations has been opened (<https://ecr.secure-platform.com:443/a>). The application consists of a CV and a short cover letter that describes the applicant's reasons for applying, prior preparation—including service to ASPB—and a brief discussion of how this service will contribute to the applicant's career goals. A letter of support from the applicant's current supervisor should be submitted separately.

Committee members will conduct teleconference interviews and forward the application of the top candidate for each committee to the president-elect.

Applications are due January 15, 2019, with successful candidates informed of their selection by mid-February for a March 1, 2019, start date. Although this is a trial plan, it is our hope that it will be successful and lead to a permanent program.

Thanks to community members who provided input at Plant Biology 2018 and via social media and direct communication. ■

## NOMINATIONS OPENING SOON *continued from page 7*

### Eric E. Conn Young Investigator Award

The Eric E. Conn Young Investigator Award, first given by the Society in 2011, honors Eric E. Conn's contributions in plant biology by recognizing young scientists who will be inspired to follow in his footsteps. The award recognizes demonstrated excellence in outreach, public service, mentoring, or teaching by plant scientists at the beginning of their careers. This award is a monetary award made biennially for demonstrated commitment by a member of the Society who is not more than five years post-PhD on January 1 of the year of the presentation. It also provides a one-year membership to the Society.

### Excellence in Education Award

This award, initiated in 1988, recognizes outstanding teaching, mentoring, and/or educational outreach in plant biology by an individual, whether or not a member of the Society. It is a monetary award to be made annually in recognition of excellence in teaching, leadership in curricular development, or authorship of effective teaching materials in the science of plant biology.

### Fellow of ASPB Award

Established in 2007, the Fellow of ASPB Award may be granted to current members in recognition of direct service to the Society and distinguished and long-term contributions to plant biology. Areas of contribution may include education, mentoring, outreach, research, and professional and public

service. Examples of relevant Society service include, but are not restricted to, service on or on behalf of ASPB committees, service on editorial boards of ASPB journals, and active involvement in ASPB meetings. Current members of ASPB who have contributed to and been members of the Society for at least 10 years cumulative prior to their nomination are eligible for nomination. Recipients of the Fellow of ASPB honor, which may be granted to no more than 0.2% of the current membership each year, receive a certificate of distinction and a lapel pin.

### Martin Gibbs Medal

This monetary award, initiated in 1993, honors Martin Gibbs for his outstanding service to the Society as editor-in-chief of *Plant Physiology* from 1963 to 1992.

This award is to be given biennially to an individual, whether or not a member of the Society, who has pioneered advances that have served to establish new directions of investigation in the plant sciences. The recipient is invited to organize a symposium at the annual meeting the following year.

### Stephen Hales Prize

This award honors the Reverend Stephen Hales for his pioneering work in plant biology published in his 1727 book *Vegetable Staticks*. It is a monetary award established in 1927 for an ASPB member who has served the science of plant biology in some noteworthy manner. The award is made annually. The recipient of the award is invited to address the Society on a subject in plant biology at the next annual meeting. ■



# PB19

PLANT BIOLOGY

AUGUST 3-7 | SAN JOSE, CA

## An ASPB Member Looks Forward to San Jose for Plant Biology 2019

BY JEN ROBISON

Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis

**A**s I write, Plant Biology 2018 is in the rear view mirror, and I'm eager to focus my attention on Plant Biology 2019. I'm already planning for my favorite plant week of the year. The last day in Montreal, I won the raffle at the San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau booth. Included was a book called *100 Things to Do in San Jose Before You Die*. Although I cannot get all 100 done in the five days of Plant Biology 2019, I am excitedly flipping through the book to mark must-see activities and restaurants. One section of the book is called "Mind the Geek," so of course I started there.

Did you know San Jose has the world's largest Monopoly board? Or that peregrine falcons are housed in City Hall? The city is also home to a rose garden with 3,500 shrubs covering 189 varieties. And in San Jose, Taco Tuesday is a real thing! I know what I'm eating on August 6!

This will be my first Plant Biology meeting with my PhD and assistant professor title. I am starting my own

lab in January 2019. I don't know if we will have any data (or travel funds) to bring my first research student to present a poster. However, the Primarily Undergraduate Institutions Section and undergraduate research meetings are high on my list of things to attend. I already have questions. Undoubtedly, as I grow my lab, I will run into many more. The meeting in San Jose gives me the opportunity to talk to professors from small universities to get tips and tricks from my colleagues. I know it is 300 days away, but each day I get a little more excited to attend.

On *Plantae*, 100 days before the meeting begins (April 25, 2019), I will be making daily posts on a thread about 100 things to do in San Jose. I hope you will check in, and if you have been to the Bay Area, please reply with your review and impressions. If you have not been there but want to weigh in, feel free! Maybe we can start getting tour (networking) groups together in plenty of time before the meeting starts. Hope to see you all on *Plantae* and in San Jose! ■



# Travel Support for Plant Biology 2019

August 3–7, 2019 – San Jose, California

## ASPB 2019 Sharon Gray Women's Young Investigator Travel Award Program for Plant Biology 2019 in San Jose, California

Travel grant applications for eligible women are now being accepted.

The submission deadline is December 12, 2018.

All applications must be submitted electronically at

**<https://wyita.aspb.org>.**

Recipients will be notified by late January.

## ASPB Recognition Travel Award Program for Plant Biology 2019 in San Jose, California

Travel grant applications for eligible candidates are being accepted now.

The submission deadline is January 30, 2019.

All applications must be submitted electronically at

**<https://rta.aspb.org>.**

Recipients will be notified by late March.



**PHENOME 2019**  
FEBRUARY 6-10  
TUCSON, AZ  
HILTON EL CONQUISTADOR RESORT  
REGISTRATION & ABSTRACTS NOW OPEN  
MORE INFO AT [WWW.PHENOME2019.ORG](http://WWW.PHENOME2019.ORG)

# Highlights of the EEPP Section Annual Meeting in Montreal

BY RUSS MONSON  
University of Arizona

The Environmental and Ecological Plant Physiology (EEPP) Section held its fourth annual meeting alongside Plant Biology 2018 in Montreal on July 16. The EEPP Section is the first theme-based section within ASPB, and its mission is to advance the science and practice of the discipline, integrate the community, and support and train early career members in the area.

The agenda for the meeting included three topic areas: the annual business meeting, lightning talks, and a keynote address. A slideshow of the agenda with background information can be found on the EEPP network page on Plantae (<https://tinyurl.com/y7cmo47f>).

During the annual business meeting, we discussed a recent

improvement in membership numbers. We also discussed the upcoming election for our secretary/treasurer and outreach officer and the vote to ratify our constitution that was to take place in September. We further discussed working to become more engaged as a community and more involved with the Phenome meeting, where we feel that we can help bring a deeper ecophysiology perspective to the phenotyping community.

Early career scientists then presented their research through lightning talks:

- Demi Gamble from the Australian National University discussed physiological strategies by which cotton could be made more resilient to climate change through advanced phenotyping techniques.
- Pauline Lemmonier from the University of Illinois then discussed whether phloem loading strategies and capacities alter plant responses to elevated atmospheric carbon dioxide.
- Judy Simon from the University of Konstanz wrapped up the lightning talks by discussing the role of nitrogen uptake in the battle between native and invasive tree species, indicating that native species could have a competitive advantage over invasives via better exploitation of organic nitrogen.

The meeting wrapped up with Russ Monson, from the University of Arizona, presenting on the history and his vision for the future of the field of ecophysiology. From discussing

the initial methods for measuring gas exchange in desert scrub ecosystems to using satellite-based solar-induced fluorescence to estimating global gross primary production, Russ painted a picture of how ecophysiology can inform us about plant physiological processes and how to scale them in space and time.

The EEPP Executive Committee extends a big thank you to all the presenters and to the ASPB staff for helping make for an engaging and enlightening discussion. Also, thank you to the ASPB Membership Committee and EEPP member dues for supporting the meeting. ■



Left to right: Demi Gamble, Russ Monson, Joy Ward, Andy Vanlooche, Judy Simon, Frank Dohleman, Pauline Lemmonier



# ASPB/AAAS 2019 Mass Media Science & Engineering Fellows Program

Are you interested in science writing?

Do you want to help people understand  
complex scientific issues?

Apply for the ASPB/AAAS Mass Media Science & Engineering Fellows Program and learn how to increase public understanding of science and technology. Fellows in the 10-week 2019 summer program will work as reporters, researchers, and production assistants in mass media organizations nationwide. **Application window opened October 16, 2018, and closes January 15, 2019.**

Visit <https://www.aaas.org/mmfellowship> for more details and to download an application brochure, or email [rcorlew@aaas.org](mailto:rcorlew@aaas.org) for more information.



ADVANCING SCIENCE, SERVING SOCIETY

## Some former host sites

*CNN en Español*

*Discover Magazine*

*KQED Science*

*The Los Angeles Times*

*The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

*National Geographic*

*National Public Radio (NPR)*

*NOVA*

*PBS NewsHour*

*The Raleigh News & Observer*

*Scientific American*

*Slate*

*Smithsonian Magazine*

*STAT*

*Univision*

*Voice of America*

*The Washington Post*

*Wired Magazine*

# ASPB/AAAS 2018 Mass Media Fellow Reports In

BY ANNA GROVES

I thank ASPB for continuing to sponsor the ASPB/AAAS Mass Media Science & Engineering Fellows Program each year. I have just completed my ASPB-sponsored tenure at the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* and had an incredibly rewarding and productive experience.

I was initially interested in this fellowship because I felt I had a knack for writing and a love for science, but wasn't quite feeling the "fire in my belly" (in the words of one of my graduate committee members) for scientific research. The timing worked out perfectly for me to embark on the Mass Media Fellows journey right after defending my PhD in plant biology this spring at Michigan State (hi, Rob Last!).

At the start, I felt a slight sense of disappointment that I wasn't placed at a more well-known outlet like National Public Radio or *Scientific American*. But now, it's clear to me that the way to get science to a general audience is to go to them instead of expecting them to come to you. Local papers are read by local people, including the science-illiterate and, in today's world, the science-

averse. This makes local papers a perfect platform for kindling interest and appreciation for science where there may previously have been none.

At the *Journal Sentinel*, I wrote stories that I thought would be interesting to Wisconsinites, but I worked to expand people's boundaries just a little further into the world of science. My favorite, and most successful, example of this was my story about a man whose colleagues in the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources dubbed him "the musky whisperer" in honor of his impressive angling skills.

As I interviewed him, he emphasized how his science training had made him a better fisherman. I wove this throughout the narrative I wrote about him and ended up with a front-page headline that included the words "Think Like a Scientist." I love picturing those words plastered across kitchen tables throughout Wisconsin.

I even got a few opportunities to write about plants, with stories on how climate change will affect corn, how to plant milkweed for monarch butterflies, the plant life of the Wisconsin State Fair, and—



Anna Groves, the 13th ASPB/AAAS Mass Media Science & Engineering Fellow.

most exciting of all—the nitrogen fixation mutualism discovered in corn from Oaxaca, Mexico. I hope that nitrogen-fixing corn does change the world, so I can look back on my fellowship and remember where I was when I first heard the news (probably only the true plant nerds will share this memory, ha!) and brag to my grandchildren that I reported it to the people of Wisconsin first.

I am also pleased to report that before my fellowship was over, I accepted a full-time position as assistant editor at *Discover*

*Magazine*. This opportunity was a direct result of this fellowship in terms of both the experience necessary to snag this dream job and the network that made this happen. I started September 10.

So thank you, ASPB—thank you for this incredible opportunity. You have truly jump-started a career that I believe will be the most rewarding way for me to share a love of science with others. Plus, thanks to you, *Discover Magazine* now has a PhD plant biologist on staff! ■



Summer researchers at the Boyce Thompson Institute. Photo courtesy of Delanie Sickler.

## Find and Post Internship Opportunities on the Plantae Job Center

Did you know that the **Plantae Job Center** includes a separate section just for internships?

Not only can you list internships you're seeking to fill FOR FREE, you can also search for students looking for plant biology-related internships and find just the right aspiring researcher for your project. Posting an internship opportunity takes less than 10 minutes and reaches hundreds of potential applicants!

Check out the internship listings  
today at [plantae.org/internships](https://plantae.org/internships).

 **Plantae** Powered By ASPB  
**JOB CENTER**

Welcome to the *ASPB News* “Luminaries” column. Student and postdoc members are invited to submit their ideas for a 500- to 750-word interview they might like to conduct with a prominent scientist. Contact Membership Committee Chair Jill Deikman at [jill.deikman@monsanto.com](mailto:jill.deikman@monsanto.com), who will help you develop some questions to frame your story. If we publish your interview, you will receive a \$50 Amazon gift card.

## Natasha Raikhel

Distinguished Professor of Plant Cell Biology Emerita,  
University of California, Riverside

BY PRATEEK TRIPATHI

ASPB Student Ambassador, The Scripps Research Institute

### What got you interested in plant biology in general, and what influences directed you to your specific area of research?

It was an unusual journey. I was a musician and realized I could not be the best of the musicians out there, and hence it could not be my professional career. I became inclined toward biology after crossing off fields I didn't want to pursue from a list of careers. I had always loved and was fascinated by nature, so I decided to pursue biology. While working as a music teacher, I hired tutors to teach me math, physics, and chemistry and amazingly passed the exams to gain admission to Leningrad University in the Soviet Union, which was very hard.

I was fortunate to have great teachers who motivated me to dig deeper into biology, and I started by working with ciliates. That was the beginning of my scientific career, and I found myself devoted to asking questions and worked to get answers. I defended my PhD and became a cell biologist. This is a key point; as soon as you get interested in biology “in

principle,” you will be driven, and you will be more interested.

When I was an assistant professor, I emigrated from the Soviet Union to the United States. This was almost 40 years ago. I believe it was the right time, because molecular biology had just started to bloom in the United States. We (myself and my husband—both scientists—and our older son) arrived in Athens, Georgia, and started all over again as postdocs. I started by working with ciliates in the zoology department of the University of Georgia but then moved to the botany department as an electron microscopist in the cell biology lab.

Later, a vibrant leader and great personality who transformed the botany department in the University of Georgia, Joe Key, let me learn molecular biology in his lab. That's how I stepped into the new field and started studying plant molecular biology. It was a great learning phase in my scientific career. In Joe's lab I learned cloning and the whole of molecular biology and, in fact, cloned my first gene. I decided to study carbohydrate-binding plant *lectin* proteins and

their role in cell-specific expression, and this became the scientific question of my career at that time.

One day, I was invited for an interview at the Plant Research Laboratory (PRL) at Michigan State University. At that time, it was a pioneering and highly respected institute in plant molecular biology. When I was offered a job at the PRL, I was beside myself! In fact, it was love at first sight. I was so impressed with the vibes and its international environment, and I wanted to work there. The late Hans Kende and Chris Somerville liked the question I was asking, and I was given the opportunity to work in the PRL. These two people inspired me the most as I learned how to empower people and motivate them. Working in the PRL with exceptionally talented students, we found a signal that targeted secretory proteins to vacuoles, and from then onward I became known as a trafficking woman (not drug trafficking, but vacuolar trafficking).

When I look back and try to analyze my past, my advice to the young generation would be that



Natasha Raikhel

you must give your life a chance, and you must be excited, hard-working, and incredibly driven. Some luck is always helpful, too.

### Who influenced your scientific thinking early in your career, and how?

It was Joe Key who I would say made me into a plant molecular biologist. Later, Hans Kende and Chris Somerville were instrumental in shaping my career and who I am today, not only with regard to science, but also as a human being.

### What do you think are good career moves for young scientists?

Listen to your heart and to nature. Try to find out what drives you. Be flexible and open to opportunity and challenges, and you will be surprised how this can transform your entire professional career.

*continued on page 16*

## LUMINARIES

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**If you were able to repeat your years as a graduate student or postgrad, would you do anything differently?**

With my career trajectory and the limited choices I had growing up and getting a PhD in the Soviet Union, followed by my move to the United States, I can't think of any possible way to better deal with it all. Every phase in my life so far has been exciting and brought different flavors so close to me.

**What journals do you regularly follow?**

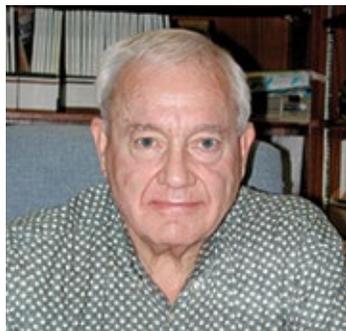
I follow all the major journals—*Nature*, *Science*, *Cell*, and *PNAS*. One cannot read all of it, but I look through these journals and others, including *eLife*, *The Plant Cell*, and *Plant Physiology*.

**What scientific discoveries over the past couple of years have influenced your research directions?**

I came to this country when molecular biology was just getting started, so I don't feel like a second-class citizen in that area. Genetics came naturally after I started my own lab. I think genomics changed everything. We don't have to work on one gene at a time; now we can focus on the whole pathway and articulate a suitable hypothesis specific to our question with one experiment. This is incredible.

**What do you think is the next big thing in plant biology?**

Well, it's not in plant biology, but biology in general: we now have an enormous amount of information, and we need to put it all together so that people have easy access to it and can use it to answer fascinating questions and contribute to great science.



*Joe Key oversaw the birth of plant molecular biology and its community at the University of Georgia.*



*Hans Kende was director of the Plant Research Laboratory during my time there.*



*Chris Somerville initiated the Arabidopsis EST project (published in 1994) and influenced the thinking of all of us, and me in particular, about Arabidopsis genetics. With Chris is his wife and my close friend, who is also a plant scientist, Shauna Somerville.*

**As an employer, what are the key qualities you look for in a potential team member?**

I look for the "best person." A best person asks creative and provocative questions. A best person is driven and understands what question he or she is asking and how to approach it. Most importantly, a best person can explain why the question is important. I like people who embrace togetherness, because only together can we make a difference. Students need to be self-motivated and driven. I don't want to be a constant babysitter. To be independent, you need to be curious and motivated.

**What advice would you give to a student interested in plant biology today?**

Work hard, ask good questions, and use good controls. Be curious and flexible. Try to take charge of your work. Ask questions—why and how—to yourself as well as to your advisers and mentors. Don't do an experiment because you *can* do it (you can do tons of experiments these days!); do it only if you *have to* do it to move forward. So think before doing an experiment.

**What experience or training do you think is most important to have?**

A good skill set and experience are a plus. I think creativity and the ability to think deeply are the ultimate keys to a scientific career, and perhaps any career.

**What is the single most important factor for a successful career in plant biology?**

It is important to take care of people, especially young people. I believe that in the present situation when funding is lacking, we need more leaders. We need to advocate for science and take care of people, society, and, above all, science.

**What advice would you give educators to encourage young people to explore science and plant biology?**

Teach science very early in their life, and *never* omit the subject of plant biology from the curriculum! Students must have the opportunity to study plant biology as early as possible to be serious and excited about it. Once they realize how amazing plants are, they are less likely to skip the subject when they go to college. Even for students who choose a different career, serious exposure to plant biology is a foundation for their understanding of and value placed on life on our planet.

**How do you look at the future of basic plant science as part of a policy-making body?**

It's hard to say, especially when funding is not good; it's tough now. I believe we should do what we are doing in the basic sciences and it will get translated. Without basic science, the future of plant biology is a nonstarter. We scientists have to be more proactively involved and make our voices heard by those involved in policy making. ■

## Policy Update

BY LAUREN BROCCOLI  
Lewis-Burke Associates, LLC

### Farm Bill Update

On June 21, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2, the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, and a week later, the Senate passed its version of the 2018 Farm Bill, S. 3042, also called the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. Although negotiations to reconcile the two different bills occurred throughout the summer, Congress failed to reach a conference package before the 2014 Farm Bill expired on September 30. The House version contains controversial provisions to increase work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and to alter forest management activities that are delaying a final resolution.

At the time of this writing, House and Senate Agriculture Committee leadership was expected to meet to discuss negotiations. It remains unclear whether leadership will advance an extension bill to maintain programs from the 2014 Farm Bill that have recently expired. Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) has been quoted as saying that the effects of the Farm Bill's expiration will not be felt until December, so an extension may not be necessary. Progress on a final 2018 Farm Bill will also be affected by the recess for midterm elections; Senate Agriculture Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS) recently indicated his intention to vote on a final bill after the election.

### Congress Passes Appropriations Package for Several Agencies, Continuing Resolution for Others

Early in September, Congress passed and the president signed into law a “minibus” three-bill spending package that includes the final version of the fiscal year (FY) 2019 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill, which provides funding for the DOE Office of Science and the Advanced Research Projects Agency–Energy (ARPA-E). In the FY2019 conference bill, the Office of Science received a 5% increase and ARPA-E a 3.6% increase.

Later in the month, Congress passed a second minibus that included the FY2019 funding for Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (L-HHS-ED) appropriations bills and a continuing resolution (CR) until December 7 for the seven appropriations bills that have yet to be completed. The CR funds the remaining appropriations bills, including funding for USDA and NSF, at FY2018 levels through December 7, 2018. Notably, this bill provided a \$2 billion increase for NIH.

Further progress on FY2019 appropriations will be delayed until after the midterm elections in November. The outcome of the elections will affect the remaining funding bills because of controversial policy riders and spending pressures, such as the administration's border wall. This is the first time since 1997 that a major-

ity of the budget was resolved before the fiscal year ended on September 30.

#### Sources and Additional Information

- The L-HHS-ED summary is available at <https://tinyurl.com/yaj9lcwk>.
- The Energy and Water Development summary is available at <https://tinyurl.com/ycm8wjq4>.

### Senate Commerce Committee Favorably Reports Kelvin Droegemeier

On September 5, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation favorably reported the nomination of Kelvin Droegemeier to be director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Droegemeier is an extreme weather expert who was most recently vice president for research at the University of Oklahoma and previously served as vice chairman of the National Science Board. If confirmed, Droegemeier would be responsible for coordinating and overseeing government-wide initiatives in science and technology.

The vote, which was unanimously in favor of Droegemeier's nomination, followed a confirmation hearing the previous week in which members were generally supportive of the nominee. Primary topics of discussion during the confirmation hearing included (but were not limited to) the need to protect science from

political influence, to ensure U.S. scientific leadership in the face of a rising China, and to address sexual harassment in the scientific community. Droegemeier emphasized OSTP's role as the coordinator of government-wide science initiatives, workforce development issues, and technology transfer. A floor vote for the nominee has not yet been scheduled, but Chairman John Thune (R-SD) expressed hope that Droegemeier would be quickly confirmed by the full Senate.

#### Sources and Additional Information

- The full confirmation hearing, including archived webcast, can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y9wexpml>.
- The White House announcement of Droegemeier's nomination is available at <https://tinyurl.com/ycuvfaqv>.

### NSF Releases Core Program Solicitations for the Biosciences Directorate

The NSF Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) has released updated core solicitations for its Division of Environmental Biology (DEB), Division of Integrative Organismal Systems (IOS), and Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences (MCB). Notable changes include a move to no-deadline submissions and a new restriction that limits PIs to one submission per year to the core programs of each division. Additionally, each core sollicita-

*continued on page 18*

**POLICY UPDATES***continued from page 17*

tion offers a Rules of Life track that spans the core BIO programs.

BIO also released an updated solicitation for its Infrastructure Capacity for Biology (ICB) program. The ICB program is divided into four opportunities: Cyberinfrastructure for Biological Research, Collections in Support of Biological Research, Improvements to Biological Field Stations and Marine Laboratories, and Instrument Capacity for Biological Research. An earlier program, Advances in Bioinformatics (ABI), has been archived and will no longer be accepting proposals. The new cyberinfrastructure program is similar to ABI but does not have any tracks or outlined types of awards.

NSF anticipates \$40 million in funding and intends to support between 50 and 80 awards for the ICB solicitation. Individual projects or sites are eligible for one submission per fiscal year, and an individual PI can appear on no more than two submissions per fiscal year. Submissions must include a one-page project summary that highlights the intellectual merit and broader impacts of the proposal in addition to a longer project description that provides a more in-depth justification for the proposal. Additional proposal submission information can be found on the solicitation.

*Sources and Additional Information*

- The DEB Core Programs Solicitation can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y79h9jr3>.

- The IOS Core Programs Solicitation can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y85wtjge>.
- The MCB Core Programs Solicitation can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y92nf63y>.
- The ICB Program Solicitation can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/hljzbsb>.

**Association of Public Data Users Hosts Webinar on NIFA Relocation**

On September 20, the Association of Public Data Users hosted a public webinar regarding the relocation and restructuring of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Economic Research Service (ERS). The webinar included remarks from two former USDA chief scientists and a former administrator of ERS, who expressed concern over USDA's proposal to relocate NIFA and ERS outside of Washington, DC, and shift ERS oversight responsibilities from the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area to the Office of the Chief Economist.

Catherine Woteki, undersecretary of REE during the Obama administration, characterized the move as rushed and “ill conceived,” urging USDA to conduct and release an in-depth cost-benefit analysis to justify the move. She also stated that the proposed realignment of ERS is likely a violation of the 1994 Farm Bill, which created REE and delegated the functions of ERS to that part of the agency. Woteki also asserted that the justification of reducing costs lacks merit as USDA has yet to conduct any analysis that demonstrates significant savings.

Gale Buchanan, who served as undersecretary of REE during the Bush administration, echoed Woteki's concerns. He asserted that although Secretary Perdue's goal to provide better service to stakeholders is admirable, moving ERS and NIFA would be counterintuitive to that objective. Former ERS administrator Susan Offutt called the move an existential threat to ERS, contending that the reorganization could result in a drastic funding decrease. She emphasized that the move from REE to the Office of the Chief Economist would undermine the independence of ERS and complicate its mission to conduct unbiased economic and statistical research. Offutt also urged a thorough review of the plan.

USDA deputy secretary Stephen Censky joined the conclusion of the webinar. In his remarks, Censky emphasized the immediate need to relocate NIFA because the building's lease is ending. He cited a National Academies study from the 1990s as supporting the reorganization. Although he did not address staff recruitment and retention data, Censky acknowledged that components of ERS and NIFA that interact with Congress and other federal research agencies will remain in Washington, DC.

*Source and Additional Information*

- A recording of the webinar can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y7kxx8pv>.

**FFAR Updates Research Challenge Areas for 2019**

On September 25, the Foundation for Food and Agriculture (FFAR) released a request for comments on its updated research challenge

areas for 2019. The FFAR challenge areas guide funding opportunities and are designed to solicit innovative proposals that address global challenges in food and agriculture. The broad research themes included in this request for comments are soil health, sustainable water management, advanced animal systems, next-generation crops, healthy food systems, and urban agriculture. FFAR hosted a public meeting on October 12, and comments were accepted through its website.

FFAR was established in the 2014 Farm Bill with \$200 million as part of an effort to encourage ambitious, innovative proposals in food and agricultural research capable of providing solutions to society's grand challenges. The House did not reauthorize FFAR in its version of the 2018 Farm Bill, but the Senate version authorized an additional \$200 million on the condition that FFAR be financially self-sufficient by the next Farm Bill. Congress has yet to finalize the 2018 Farm Bill, and conference negotiations are still ongoing.

*Source and Additional Information*

- More information about the 2019 FFAR challenge areas is available at <https://tinyurl.com/yb6hlgkx>.

**Funding Opportunity: NSF BIO Releases Two Solicitations for Rules of Life Big Idea**

NSF has released two new solicitations for one of its 10 Big Ideas, “Understanding the Rules of Life (URoL): Epigenetics” and “Building a Synthetic Cell—An Ideas Lab Activity.”

Led by the Directorate for Biological Sciences, URoL goals are to better understand the “rules” of how life functions, to develop research tools and infrastructure to advance this field, to train the next generation of researchers, and to foster convergent research across NSF. Although proposals for both new solicitations must be submitted to BIO’s Division of Emerging Frontiers, a cross-foundational team of program officers will oversee the program. Researchers who have not previously engaged on URoL are encouraged to participate. Both solicitations limit individuals to serve as PI or co-PI on only one proposal, although there is no limit on proposals per institution. Additional information on the two URoL solicitations is presented below.

### ***Understanding the Rules of Life: Epigenetics***

The URoL Epigenetics program is intended to support and promote multidisciplinary research, education, and workforce training in the field of epigenetics. The solicitation calls on proposals to use “complementary, interdisciplinary approaches to investigate

how epigenetic phenomena lead to emergent properties that explain the fundamental behavior of living systems,” explaining that successful projects should “identify general principles (‘rules’) that underlie a wide spectrum of biological phenomena across size, complexity (e.g., molecular, cellular, organismal, population) and temporal scales (from sub-second to geologic) in taxa from anywhere within the tree of life.” Furthermore, these projects must integrate multiple research perspectives, approaches, and disciplines; examples listed include biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, geology, mathematics, physics, and social and behavioral sciences.

Through this solicitation, NSF seeks to explore the impact of epigenetic inheritance and the broader consequences of this biological phenomenon across living systems (e.g., populations, communities, ecosystems). NSF is focused on “understanding the relationship between epigenetic mechanisms associated with environmental change, the resultant phenotypes of organisms, and how these mechanisms lead to robustness and adaptability of organisms and populations.”

Full proposals are due February 1, 2019. NSF anticipates approximately \$15 million to \$18 million in available funding to support six to 12 new awards. There are two submission tracks: Track 1, up to \$500,000 over three years, and Track 2, up to \$3 million over five years.

### ***Understanding the Rules of Life: Building a Synthetic Cell—An Ideas Lab Activity***

The goal of the URoL Building a Synthetic Cell Ideas Lab is to facilitate new transformative research proposals that bring together multidisciplinary expertise to work toward “designing, fabricating, and validating synthetic cells that express specified phenotypes.” The Ideas Lab mechanism is an intensive process that aims to leverage advances in “biophysics, chemistry, computer science, geosciences, materials, soft condensed matter, and biology with progress in engineering and social sciences.” Proposals that address education in existing and future technologies and in bioethics are also important considerations for NSF. NSF welcomes preliminary proposals from a range of disciplines including mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry,

geosciences, ethics and statistics, engineering, and graduate and undergraduate education.

Preliminary proposals are due December 28, 2018, and “participation in the Ideas Lab requires an invitation in response to a preliminary proposal. Submission of a full proposal derived from the Ideas Lab requires both participation in the Ideas Lab and an invitation to submit a full proposal.” Full proposals (by invitation only) are due May 13, 2019. The Ideas Lab will take place Monday, February 25, to Friday, March 1, 2019, at a location close to NSF headquarters in Northern Virginia. NSF anticipates approximately \$10 million in available funding to support four to six new awards in FY2019.

### ***Sources and Additional Information***

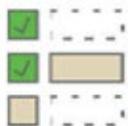
- The URoL Epigenetics solicitation is available at <https://tinyurl.com/yaj96qz3>.
- The URoL Building a Synthetic Cell Ideas Lab is available at <https://tinyurl.com/ycuxebow>.
- More information on the Rules of Life Big Idea is available at <https://tinyurl.com/ydav7x6o>. ■



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## ASPB Welcomes Francky Rakotomanana as Senior Staff Accountant



Francky Rakotomanana joined ASPB on November 5, 2018, as a senior staff accountant. He will assist the Finance and Administration Department in implementing effective internal controls and improving the processes in place in order to produce timely and accurate financial information.

Francky landed his first full-time position at Heymann, Suissa and Stone (HSS), a public accounting firm that caters to small businesses and high-profile

individuals in the Washington, DC, area. During his three years with HSS as a staff accountant, he was responsible for entering the transactions in the accounting system, processing payroll, and preparing financial statements and income tax returns.

Francky graduated from the University of Maryland Robert H. Smith School of Business with a BS in Accounting. He is a member of the international honor society Phi Theta Kappa and received the Dr. Harry Harden Jr. Student

Academic Excellence Award.

Francky is fluent in three languages: Malagasy, French, and English. He was born and raised in Madagascar, and arrived in the United States in 2010 with his family. Since then he has been very active in his Malagasy community in Washington, DC. As a member of Youth Group FMK-DC, a Malagasy gospel choir, he has performed at their annual Christmas concert and in Sunday services as a tenor singer. ■

## Fond Farewells to Susan Cato and Stephanie Liu-Kuan



### Susan Cato

The staff, committee members, and other volunteers of ASPB wish the best to Susan Cato, who has left her position at ASPB for a new opportunity at Healthcare Financial Management Association.

Susan worked at ASPB for five years. During that time she helped create and launch Plantae.org,

the online community for plant scientists. As part of this effort, Susan worked to increase the engagement not just of members, but of all plant scientists. She also worked to launch the first online seminars and to increase the visibility of Plantae at the annual meeting.

Before coming to ASPB, Susan spent many years at various associations doing web and digital strategy.

Susan has been an exceptional leader, colleague, and friend, and we wish her the best of luck. ■



### Stephanie Liu-Kuan

ASPB offers a fond farewell and best wishes to Stephanie Liu-Kuan, who left her position as accounts receivable and payable specialist in September. Born in Taiwan, Stephanie came to the United States in 1981. She held positions

with a variety of nonprofit organizations before joining ASPB in 1999. Stephanie is taking some time off for extensive global travel, and we wish her bon voyage! ■

## Rethinking the Past and Shaping the Future of Plant Biology

**Deadline for submission: June 30, 2019**

In celebration of 30 years of publishing the best research in plant molecular, cellular, and developmental biology, we encourage authors to submit their most exciting new results for consideration for a special 30th Anniversary Collection on shaping the next 30 years of plant cell and developmental biology. The 30th Anniversary Collection will focus on the historic strengths of the journal, and articles in the area of molecular-mechanism directed cell and developmental biology are especially encouraged. This includes large-scale studies that demonstrate how genome-wide analyses can address fundamental questions of plant biology. We will be looking for ways in which these papers enlarge upon or change our concept of the molecular mechanisms underlying a biological process or phenomenon.

Submissions will be accepted until June 30, 2019. All articles chosen that are published in 2019 will form part of the 30th Anniversary Collection. Just add a note to your cover letter that you wish to have the submission considered for the 30th Anniversary Collection. All articles accepted into the collection will receive open access free of charge and will be highlighted with an In Brief article and first author profiles.

The 30th Anniversary Collection will also include a series of commentaries on classic papers published in *The Plant Cell* that opened up new areas of investigation or otherwise had a major impact on their field. Looking to the future, we have also invited reviews on genome- and informatics-enabled emerging model organisms that broaden our understanding of fundamental processes in plants, from the subcellular level to the field and from seconds or minutes to evolutionary time scales.

**Submit your best work to *The Plant Cell* and help shape the future of plant biology!**

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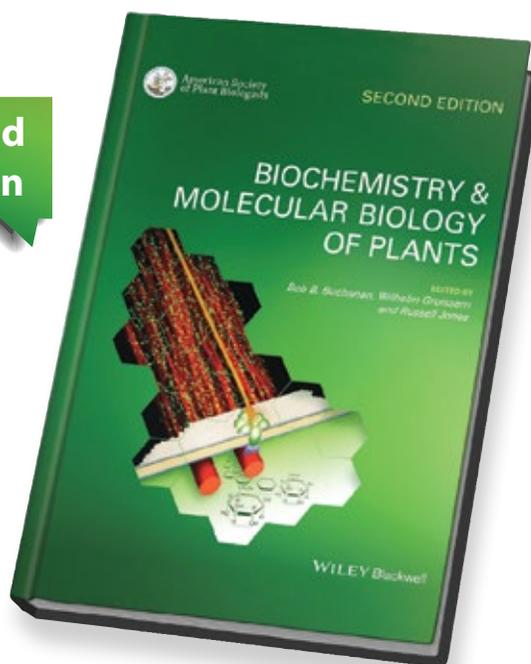
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