



Publications Committee American Society of Plant Biologists

Minutes of Committee Meeting held Sunday, August 4, 2019, 11 am – 1 pm
San Jose, California

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Neil Olszewski, chair
Katie Dehesh
Pamela Hines
Hong Ma
Craig Schenk
Steve Theg

Ex officio

Judy Callis, president-elect
Ivan Baxter, Editor-in-Chief, *Plant Direct*
Sabeeha Merchant, Editor-in-Chief, *The Plant Cell*

Staff

Crispin Taylor, CEO
Nancy Winchester, director of publications
Clara Woodall, CFO
Jennifer Regala, managing editor

GUESTS

Maureen McCann

Minutes

1. Approval of agenda. Approved by unanimous assent.
2. Approval of minutes of meeting on May 2, 2019. Approved by unanimous assent.
3. Ethics Review Committee action items
 - a. All authors are cc'd on ERC decision letters; we should be focused on notifying them at the outset. Moved by Ivan Baxter that we inform all authors of the investigation seven working days after notifying the corresponding author and tell the corresponding author that we will be informing the coauthors. Seconded by Hong Ma. Sabeeha Merchant suggested adding initials of each contributor to each image in a paper. Discussion: Use email with delivery notification. Approved by unanimous assent.
 - b. Change language so that all authors have the right to appeal. Change on website: "We extend the right to appeal to all authors." Approved by unanimous assent.
 - c. Complainant: We don't communicate with complainants after acknowledging receipt of allegation. COPE recommends notifying complainant of outcome. Moved by Pam Hines that the outcome of an investigation should be communicated to the complainant soon after the authors are notified. Seconded by Hong Ma. If a correction or retraction is published, send the link to the

correction/retraction when notifying the complainant. Ivan suggests telling them a day before—after approval of the wording and in production. Approved by unanimous assent.

- d. COPE recommends notifying the corresponding author's current institutional Office of Research Integrity (ORI) if identifiable. Decision was to stick with the author's institution versus or along with the NIH ORI, because that office is focused on NIH and the national level and does not work at the "article level." Moved by Steve Theg that adverse outcomes will be communicated to the appropriate institutional ORI. Discussion: Ivan: if a coauthor is clearly implicated in the misconduct, inform his or her institution as well. Sabeeha: this will be easier once we identify each figure's contributor. Approved by unanimous assent.
 - e. If we happen to discover a problem in another journal, does ASPB as publisher have a responsibility to address it? Crispin: Limit our investigation to our interests. Neil: Perhaps we don't need a policy about this, we just don't need a prohibition, and we don't have one. Nothing prohibits us from communicating out, case by case. No motion needed.
4. TPC Editor-in-Chief search. A memo of understanding is in progress with the new candidate.
 5. Publishing Partnership. Nancy explains the process to date, and Neil walks through the timeline. Pubs Comm and the EiCs will give the Board of Directors their feedback. The question was raised about deferring the search for a year; Nancy explained the perils of waiting (publishers are becoming less likely to answer RFPs; contracts are becoming less lucrative due to the changing landscape in scholarly publishing).
 6. Chinese downgrading of *Plant Physiology*. Hong explained that for years *The Plant Cell* was the only plant journal in "Class A," then *Plant Physiology*, among others, was added, though it was recently downgraded. It is not so much a ranking of the Impact Factor as much as a journal's standing percentage-wise, for example, "the top 10%." And it is subject specific. The decisions partly reflect politics, and partly are seen as a simple way to do things, though widely disliked. The rankings are examined every year or two. Rankings are relative to other journals and not the absolute Impact Factor. So *Plant Physiology* must, for example, do better than *New Phytologist* and not just regain an I.F. > 6.
 7. Author Survey (six documents were previously sent to the committee)
 - a. Neil: identify action items. Talk in a few weeks. Ask the EiCs to take survey findings to their boards as they see fit.
 - b. Market our improvements as we implement them. The message is: We asked. You responded. WE LISTENED! Capitalize on our actions in as many ways as we can.
 - c. Must look at the survey in a number of different ways. Topics that arose include
 - i. Increased portability of manuscripts
 - ii. Simplified submissions process
 - iii. Double-blind peer review (Sabeeha: other journals that have tried this)
 - iv. Review transfers/portability of reviews. Pam: posting of reviewer comments online...post intermediate revisions of the paper (but you see that at bioRxiv)

- v. Pam: address psychology of being declined, rather than addressing “the 18 million pain points in here”
- vi. Our processes must work for authors but also readers.
- vii. Neil: send your ideas to Nancy, who will compile them and provide an “unfiltered” list to the EiCs, let the EiCs respond to the list, then rank for usefulness, etc.

8. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Modifications to ethics policy as agreed in # 3
- b. Ongoing discussion and implementation of survey items identified in # 7

9. Adjournment at 1 pm.