



American Society of Plant Biologists

Cultivating a better future through plant biology research

ASPB Code of Conduct

The American Society of Plant Biologists (ASPB, founded in 1924 as the American Society of Plant Physiologists, ASPP) was established to promote the growth and development of plant biology, to encourage and publish research in plant biology, and to promote the interests and professional advancement of plant scientists in general. ASPB members educate, mentor, advise, and nurture future generations of plant biologists; they work to increase understanding of plant biology, as well as science in general, in K-16 schools and among the general public; they advocate in support of plant biology research; they work to convey the relevance and importance of plant biology; and they provide expertise in policy decisions world-wide. Overall, ASPB members, as representatives of the society, work to disseminate information and excitement about plant sciences, especially through ASPB's advocacy, outreach activities, conferences, and publications.

It is a duty of the ASPB Board to ensure that the organization uphold its stated purposes, goals, and mission and the law permits the Board to enact a Code of Conduct of conduct to carry out this duty. The law also permits the Board to take necessary disciplinary action if member conduct is contrary to ASPB's purposes and/or would adversely affect its ability to achieve its purposes, goals, and mission. ASPB's credibility and ability to advance plant biology depends on and reflects upon the integrity and reputation of its members. Membership in ASPB is predicated on its members adhering to certain standards of conduct, and so, by virtue of their membership, ASPB members agree to abide by this Code of Conduct.

If there are questions regarding conference conduct expectations and/or reporting violations of the conference code of conduct at an ASPB-organized meeting, please go to <https://plantbiology.aspb.org/code-of-conduct/>.

If there are questions regarding ASPB's awards revocation policy, please go to: <https://aspb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/13b.-ASPB-Revocation-Proceedings.pdf>.

If there are questions regarding author misconduct in ASPB journals, please go to: <https://aspb.org/publications/policies-procedures/#toggle-id-1>

Code of Conduct for ASPB Members

1. ASPB members shall treat all individuals in the professional enterprise collegially and with respect, including supervisors and colleagues, other ASPB members and staff, students and other early-career colleagues, technical and clerical staff, and members of the public.

2. ASPB members must refrain from all forms of discrimination, harassment, and bullying (as defined below) in their professional encounters. This professional standard is especially important when the interactions involve power differentials, because these behaviors have adverse impacts on the careers of scientists and the proper conduct of science.

Discrimination is prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups of people based on their race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, disability, veteran status, political affiliation, or any other characteristic protected by applicable laws.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Other types of harassment include any written, verbal, physical or other conduct in any medium directed at individuals or groups of people because of their race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, disability, veteran status, political affiliation or any other characteristic protected by applicable laws, that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Bullying is unwelcome, aggressive behavior involving the use of influence, threat, intimidation, or coercion to dominate others in the professional environment.

It is essential to remember that it is the perception by the observer and/or receiver of any of the above, not the intent by the alleged perpetrator, that constitutes a violation of the code of conduct.

3. ASPB members are expected to adhere to their employers' codes of conduct and/or ethics that pertain to professional activities, research, teaching, and/or scholarship.

4. ASPB members shall carry out their professional activities, including research and publishing, with integrity and the highest standards. ASPB members shall not commit scientific misconduct, defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism and as described for ASPB's publications in more detail here: <https://aspb.org/publications/aspb-journals/policies-procedures/>. Scientific error or incorrect interpretation of research data that may occur as part of the scientific process does not constitute scientific misconduct. ASPB members shall avoid detrimental practices that are clear violations of the fundamental tenets of scholarship, which include operating as fair and objective peer reviewers, maintaining confidentiality when requested, promptly moving to correct

the literature when errors in their own work are detected, including all deserving authors on publications, and giving appropriate credit to prior work in citations.

5. ASPB members shall disclose all relevant relationships, financial or otherwise, and conflicts of interest, that might be perceived to influence the outcome of their ASPB-related work.

6. ASPB members shall not retaliate against any individual reporting an alleged violation of any ASPB code of conduct.

7. The above expectations cover all professional activities independent of location.

Process for Reporting, Evaluating, and Adjudicating Alleged Violations

ASPB is not an investigative body and will not conduct any investigation and, when relevant to the allegation, will rely on investigative reports and/or public announcement of findings or actions taken (or links thereto) from a credible body, such as the Federal government's Office of Research Integrity, other Federal or state agencies (e.g., NSF, NIH), another professional organization, an academic institution, a court of law, or admission(s) of conduct by the accused. Reference to, or inclusion of, such information is required in an allegation.

All allegations of violations of this code of conduct will be referred in writing to the CEO and the president of the Society. The person(s) submitting the allegation is referred to here as the Notifier(s). The ASPB member or staff that is the subject of the allegation is referred to here as the defendant. Notifiers making oral allegations will be advised by the CEO that no action will be taken by the Society unless the allegation is made in writing, and anonymous requests cannot be accepted. The CEO will consult with ASPB's presidential leadership (current, past and president-elect) to determine if the allegation is substantiated with appropriate documentation; and if the majority agree, then the allegation will be referred to a three-member ad hoc code of conduct committee (appointed by the president-elect after consultation with the presidential leadership and the CEO). The ad hoc code of conduct committee will evaluate the allegation and make recommendations or provide an evaluation to the Board of Directors (BoD), who will make the final decision by majority vote. Members of the BoD with potential or documented conflicts of interest related to the allegation must declare these conflicts and recuse themselves.

Possible decisions include removals or suspensions of membership and/or the privilege to attend an ASPB-sponsored meeting or event for a specified period of time. After this period, the individual may renew their membership and/or resume attending conferences.

If the allegation is against the CEO, the president will consult with the past president and president-elect to determine if the allegation is substantiated with appropriate documentation; and if the majority concludes that there are grounds for concern, then the president will refer the allegation and supporting materials to the above ad hoc code of conduct committee. If the allegation includes one of the leadership (current, past or president-elect), the CEO will consult

with the Secretary and the two members of BoD elected by the ASPB membership to determine if the allegation is substantiated with appropriate documentation; and if they conclude that there are grounds for concern, refer it to an ad hoc code of conduct committee. In the latter case, the ad hoc committee will be appointed by the Secretary, and the leadership involved (president or president-elect) must recuse themselves from the BoD deliberations and decisions.

If for any cases the BoD fails to reach a majority decision (in the situation with an even number of voting members because one member has recused themselves and there is a tie vote) or it lacks a quorum (that is, two or more BoD members must recuse themselves), the deciding body will consist of remaining BoD members and the members of the ad hoc code of conduct committee.

In all instances, the CEO (or the president in the case of the CEO), in consultation with the presidential leadership, will determine whether or not legal review is necessary before the Society takes action.

After a decision is made, the defendant will be notified in writing within 30 calendar days by the CEO (or by the president in the case of the CEO) of the decision and of any action that will be taken by the Society. In the event of a decision that includes removals or suspensions of membership or suspensions of attendance at ASPB-sponsored events, the defendant may appeal this decision to the Board of Directors. Such an appeal must be filed in writing within 14 days of receipt of the decision. The Board of Directors will evaluate the appeal and either accept or reject the appeal directly, or refer the appeal to the ad hoc code of conduct committee for their re-evaluation. The final decision on the appeal will be made by the BoD. The notifier will be informed in writing of the outcome of the process within 30 calendar days after the time period for submission of an appeal has passed or after a decision on the appeal is made by the BoD.

Report of Activities

All information relating to allegations and subsequent inquiries will be kept confidential by the ad hoc code of conduct committee, any other Society members, and staff working on the matter and will not be disclosed to any third parties, unless considered necessary according to other aspects of this policy. All actions, including telephone calls, must be documented for all situations, even those resolved immediately.

The ad hoc code of conduct committee will prepare an annual report of its activities and submit it to the Board of Directors at their first meeting of the calendar year. A redacted report will be included in the public documents from the Board of Directors meeting, available to members on the ASPB.org website.

Approved by the ASPB Board of Directors

February 12, 2021

(Adapted, with permission, from <http://www.nasonline.org/about-nas/code-of-conduct/nas-code-of-conduct.pdf>)

Relevant Publications

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, “**Fostering Integrity in Research**,” *National Academies Press*, 2017.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, “**Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine**,” pp 68-73, *National Academies Press*, 2018.