

# ABRIDGED Minutes from the October 13-15, 2020 APS Council Virtual Meeting

## DAY 1: October 13, 2020

### A. Call to Order (Gleason)

Meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. Central. Jim Bradeen was appointed as the parliamentary facilitator. Welcome and introductions followed.

**Council present:** Mark Gleason, Amy Charkowski, Ron Walcott, Lindsey du Toit, Jim Bradeen, Lawrence Datnoff, Katy Stevenson, Courtney Gallup, Ashok Chanda, Krishna Subbarao, David Gent

**Staff:** Amy Hope, Carol Ericson, Linda Schmitt, Erik Uner

**Invited:** Jim Meffert, Tecker Intl.

### B. Approval of Minutes (All)

**MOTION:** to approve the September 17, 2020, minutes as corrected. *Seconded; motion carried.*

### D. Strategic Plan Environment Scan (All)

Council members were sent an environmental scan survey prior to today's meeting where they were asked to identify key trends (changes in progress and the direction of that change) that have the greatest impact on our industry in the following areas: demographics of our industry, social values/society, business/economic climate, technology, science, and economic climate. In addition, they were asked to identify what is causing the trends to happen or the key drivers of those trends. What one or two things, that are not happening today, might cause significant change in our industry if they did happen in the near future.

**REVIEWED** current goals and initiatives:

Strategic Goals/Priorities	Initiatives
Secure the future of APS as a leading source of plant health knowledge dissemination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Launch GROW-Plant Health Exchange</li> <li>▪ Transition <i>MPMI</i> to open access in early 2021</li> <li>▪ Launch <i>PhytoFrontiers</i> as a new open access journal with broad scope in 2020</li> <li>▪ Continue to promote research and education regarding emerging and re-emerging diseases and pathogens</li> <li>▪ Continue to publish in our journals</li> <li>▪ Focus on online educational resources during pandemic</li> </ul>
Strengthen APS as a global professional organization for plant health science.	Enhance membership programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase membership in APS through focused efforts on early career and mid-career segments</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase engagement in APS</li> <li>▪ Deliver high-value member benefits</li> </ul> <p>Increase engagement of plant health professionals living outside the U.S. in APS by developing and/or strengthening ties with sister societies as feasible through Office of International Programs (OIP).</p> <p>Engage industry through Office of Private Sector Relations (OPSR) and promote plant health science as exciting career options through Office of Public Relations and Outreach (OPRO).</p>
<p>Foster innovative conference strategies to meet members needs and expectations for knowledge exchange and networking.</p>	<p>Re-imagine the annual meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incorporate virtualized sessions into the annual meeting including live streaming, pre-recorded sessions and ePosters as examples.</li> <li>▪ Continue to incorporate innovation and enhancements to programming and networking that provide “stickiness” and increased engagement.</li> </ul>

Meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m. CDT.

**DAY 2: October 14, 2020**

Meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. CDT.

**Council present:** Mark Gleason, Amy Charkowski, Ron Walcott, Lindsey du Toit, Jim Bradeen, Lawrence Datnoff, Katy Stevenson, Courtney Gallup, Ashok Chanda, Krishna Subbarao, David Gent

**Staff:** Amy Hope, Carol Ericson, Linda Schmitt, Erik Uner

**F. Member Engagement (Hope)**

What is it? The investment of time, money, attention, and participation, by both the association and its members, in order to provide meaningful, long-term, mutually beneficial experiences and relationships that advance the profession. Culture, process, and structure are components that make our association work. When it’s properly functioning, it’s an asset to help you meet the needs of members. When it’s not effective, it becomes a liability.

Today’s focus:

- Office of Education (OE) – Monica Lewandowski, chair
- 2026 Professional Development Forum (2026 PDF) – Renee Rioux, chair

**SHARED** current Mission, General Responsibilities, and organizational structure for [OE](#) and [2026 PDF](#).

**ACTION:** Presidential team make calls to Monica and Renee re. discussion on OE and PDF 2026.

## G. Divisions' role in engagement (Chanda)

- Divisions have a huge role in our engagement. As of 2018, 58% of APS members have division membership.
- Held some in-person meetings in 2020 before COVID. Others were either virtual or hybrid options. Postponed some due to COVID.
- Member engagement includes oral and poster presentations, field trips, professional development, Careers 101 workshops, travel awards, service awards, plant pathologists of the future symposium.
- Southern Division active on social media. They also have students on their executive committee.
- New initiatives: mid-career service award, mid-career engagement, postdoc travel awards.
- Promote division meetings.
- Virtual format – breaks the travel barrier. Allows others to attend other non-home division meetings.

## H. Annual Committee Report Summaries (Bradeen/Stevenson/Gent/Gallup)

**SHARED** highlights from reports:

**NOTED** that report questions don't align with what we're looking for and recommend CALs review annual report form questions.

**ACTIONS:** CALS/ICO review and update questions asked on committee's annual report form and provide changes to Erik Uner to update the online form.

**ACTION:** Add to November call agenda to review Council responses to annual committee report questions. CALs to come back with draft of responses to discuss and share with Council on Nov call. Send specific comments to Katy to compile.

**ACTION:** Council to write a public thank to include in *PhytoNews* thanking committees for submitting reports.

**ACTION:** Include AMB in "Get to know your APS" for *PhytoNews* column.

**ACTION:** Lawrence, Mark and Staff to draft finance overview article for *PhytoNews*.

## I. Channels for Engagement (Ericson)

### 1. Plantopia

- Purpose – raise the visibility and effectively communicate the impact of plant pathology
- Audience – science-interested public, and members
- To date – 20 episodes by end of CY20
- Lessons learned:
  - focus on good stories, timely, human connection, good storytellers
  - Develop guide for submission ideas
  - Prescreen interviewees
- Plantopia metrics: published 15 to date. People often listen to most recent first and then go back to historical ones. 8,000 downloads total to date.

- Plantopia budget status:
  - Overbudget at the moment. If we want to continue for the next 6 months, we will need more money.
  - How large does the listenership need to be to generate meaningful advertising revenue? All depends on what the sponsor wants.
  - David Gadoury is agreeable to continue being the interviewer for them. Who can help with sharing tips on the things that what makes a good podcast to help the presenters? This is exactly what the Alan Alda training is helpful for - and there are videos and books on this. Another good resource - <https://www.amazon.com/TED-Talks-Storytelling-Techniques-Best-ebook/dp/B00EPOAAE2>
  - Collaborate with other professional societies to do “crossover” podcast episodes? Great way to build our listenership.
  - Bring Plantopia series to the attention of Tri-Societies, ESA, etc.

**CONSENSUS** that Plantopia is a valuable product and should continue. Will continue budget discussion tomorrow.

## **2. *Phytopathology News* and News Capsule Metrics**

- Compared 2018 downloads with 2020 downloads and entrances for *PhytoNews* and noted numbers are very comparable. 90%+ of the traffic is within a week of the issue release.
- News Cap email open rate is 32.20% compared to all APS emails and board messages rate of 41.51%. Average for all messages sent to >3,000 contacts is 35.65%.

## **3. Webinars**

- Great success story! This year there have been 21 webinars, and more are being scheduled. 2019 saw a total of five webinars.

## **4. Website and Social Media**

- Traffic up overall. Google tracks age demographics when they have it.
- Social media is active.

*Call adjourned 2:08 p.m. Central.*

## **Day 3: October 15, 2020**

Meeting called to order at 11:02 a.m. CDT.

**Council present:** Mark Gleason, Amy Charkowski, Ron Walcott, Lindsey du Toit, Jim Bradeen, Lawrence Datnoff, Katy Stevenson, Courtney Gallup, Ashok Chanda, Krishna Subbarao, David Gent

**Staff:** Amy Hope, Carol Ericson, Linda Schmitt, Erik Uner

## **J. APS Publishing Health & Trends in Scholarly Publishing (Subbarao/Grahek)**

Always looking ahead as a publisher. Work with consultant Simon Inger and editorial boards, authors, reviewers for feedback.

**SHARED** journal metrics through Sept. 2020.

- Readership 3.94 million full-text downloads, up 46% over prior year
- Authorship
  - 2,597 submissions 9 months excluding PD notes, up 23% over prior.
  - 1,485 accepted papers 12 months including PD notes, up 3% over prior.
  - 6,271 pages published 9 months, up 7% over prior.
- No drop off yet due to COVID-19.
- Amplification of Content
  - APS and IS-MPMI research updates are monthly newsletters sent to authors, reviewers, and members highlighting from each of the APS journals and promoting special issues.
  - APS News Caps and *PhytoNews* both highlight articles from journals every month.
  - Editor’s pics give EIC a chance to pick articles for extra promotion. Featured in a press release and promoted more heavily on social media and in other communications.
  - Social Media.
  - New Table of Contents alerts.
  - News releases on featured articles.

## 1. Update on Open Access Requirements

- **Plan S:** Requirements have changed again. Coalition S will continue to support OA publication in hybrid journals through the end of 2024 (*Phytopathology*, *Plant Disease*, and *Plant Health Progress* are hybrid).
- **Plan S compliant now.** *Phytobiomes Journal*, *PhytoFrontiers*, and *MPMI* (Jan. 2021) are all fully compliant.
- **APS Authors have choices** that meet OA funder requirements in all our journals now.
- **Consultant says, pay attention to these 4 areas:**
  - Funders, institutions, governments and individuals face post COVID financial challenges.
  - If there is one key factor in future success, it is going to be the quality of content published.
  - Early career researchers, and how a society supports them, will be a differentiator: the pandemic has not been kind to Early Career Researchers (ECRs). What is your society/publications role in supporting ECRs?
  - No guarantee of success – agility is going to be key.

**NOTED** that this is a good topic for AULF to consider so that they can promote early career researchers to publish in journals with no impact factor especially run by the professional societies like APS, etc. The only caveat is that early career researchers have more need to publish in journals with an impact factor as this affects their rating for those departments that put weight on this quantitative measure, as flawed as it might be. Agree, but it is an important issue.

## 2. Post-COVID-19 Financial Challenges

- What APS is doing to help institutions, funders, and individuals?
  - Hold the 2020 rate offer for institutions that choose to renew by 12/31/2020. To date 21 universities have taken advantage representing 39 subscriptions (10.12.20).
- **Waivers for authors in need** from low and lower-middle income countries to meet Plan S OA requirements.
- **Member discounts** to publish in nearly all our journals.

- **Low fee open access options.** \$1,650 to publish in *PhytoFrontiers* and *Phytobiomes Journal*. Plan to hold this until these journals grow.

**NOTED** *Phytobiomes* we expect to get a published impact factor of 6.5. Future looks good for journal.

### 3. Quality of Content

APS has always excelled in this. What APS is doing to improve the quality of content:

- Focus issues – developed by our journal editorial boards and led by guest editors who are experts in their fields.
- Pathogen Spotlight Series – developed by *Phytopathology* board to bring important papers, authors, citations.
- *MPMI's* Top 10 Unsolved Problem Series – to position *MPMI* as a leader in the research community.
- Invited Reviews – have become a common monthly feature since 2015 in *Phytopathology* and in *MPMI*. *Plant Disease* has its own feature that is widely popular. Have added value to journals.

### 4. Early Career Researchers (ECR)

What APS is doing to engage with ECRs:

- Assistant Feature Editors: *MPMI*, *Phytobiomes Journal*, and *Phytopathology* have new editorial board positions made up of postdocs and graduate students nearing completion. They have a role in amplifying the content from each of the journals in novel ways, forging stronger connections between the journals and the scientific community.
- “What’s new in *MPMI*” virtual seminar series, inviting ECRs primarily as the author presenters.
- Renewed engagement with Associate Editors.
- Reviewer training sessions during annual meeting.
  - Suggest offering during a time separate from annual meeting
  - Webinar on reviewer training sessions would also help in attracting more qualified reviewers
- What *MPMI* needs most is submissions.
- Journals represent 70% of our income and we need to be fluid.

### 5. Agility is the Key

What APS is doing to stay agile:

- Production scalability: We are publishing more than ever before, and we need to be able to scale up and scale back as needed. We are regularly outsourcing overflow editing to freelancers.
- *PhytoFrontiers* was launched, with the start to first article in 6 months. We can respond quickly with a new journal or virtual issues.
- Resource Announcement (RA, mostly plant pathogen genome sequences) development is an example that was implemented in 2017. Since then we have had 236 RA submissions. Now our publications board is pivoting to develop policy to ensure RAs get published without diluting the impact of our higher-impact journals.
- CABI – AgriRxiv Pre-print server and BioRxiv – Pre-print server.

- Atypon and Sheridan journal service helps us meet new technology standards as they are developed for the academic publishing industry.
- Journals Health (feedback) survey in March 2021.

**NOTED** will we have any reviews in *Phytopathology* or *Plant Disease* to describe the effect of COVID on plant pathology? Would be good to mark this time in history. Noted that nothing is planned at this time.

**K. Approval of Plant Disease Editor-in-Chief (EIC)**

**MOTION:** to approve EIC nominee Mary Burrows as Associate EIC of *Plant Disease* in 2021 and EIC for January 2022-2024. *Seconded; motion passed.*

**M. Finances (Davis/Datnoff)**

**RECEIVED** September statement.

**SHARED** preliminary annual meeting detail. Noted that we will wait one more month to ensure all expenses are in before sharing final numbers.

**CONSENSUS** to continue with Plantopia and include increased expenses in current budget (estimating \$15,600).

*Meeting adjourned 1:12 p.m. CDT.*