

MINUTES

from the October 6-8, 2021

APS Council Virtual Meeting

Wednesday, October 6, 2021

A. Call to Order (Charkowski)

Meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. Central. Welcomed members and appointed David Gent as the parliamentarian/facilitator for the meetings.

Council present: Amy Charkowski, Ron Walcott, Nik Grunwald, Mark Gleason, Jim Bradeen, Lawrence Datnoff, David Gent, Sydney Everhart (late arrival), Ashok Chanda, Krishna Subbarao

Council apologies: Courtney Gallup

Staff: Amy Hope, Carol Ericson, Greg Grahek, Kurt Rood, Linda Schmitt, Eric Fletty, Erik Uner

B. Approval of Minutes (All)

MOTION: to approve the August 6, 2021, minutes. *Seconded; motion passed.*

C. Manual of Operations Alignment on Senior Councilor-at-Large role (All)

Upon reviewing the Manual of Operations (MoO) for Annual Meeting Board (AMB) and Councilor-at-Large (CAL) it was found that the Sr. CAL was to be a member on the AMB but the role and duties of the CAL being on AMB was not included in the CAL MoO. After discussions with the AMB Chair, Staff, and Sr. CAL the following was agreed upon: The Sr. CAL shall serve as an advisory role and be ex-officio, non-voting member on the Annual Meeting Board. In addition, recommend the EIC of the APS Ed Center also be an advisory role, ex-officio non-voting member.

1. PROPOSED CHANGES to Sr. CAL MoO:

ADD bullet point under specific responsibilities of Sr. CAL: Serves in an advisory role as an ex-officio non-voting member on the Annual Meeting Board.

2. PROPOSED CHANGES to AMB MoO:

ADD under Organizational structure: APS Sr. Councilor-at-Large (advisory role only, ex-officio non-voting) and make the Editor-in-Chief, APSnet Education Center as an advisory role only, ex-officio non-voting)

MOTION: to accept the proposed changes to the AMB MoO and CAL MoO as received. *Seconded; motion passed.*

ACTION: Linda to update MoO online.

D. Leadership Onboarding/Training (Hope)

A copy of the leadership training slides and materials are available on the Council Collab site in the [Orientation E-binder](#).

Trends impacting all associations and APS:

- **Content Development** (pulling it together, reusing, sharing. Internally we're putting dashboards together to watch what is happening in journals, website and then staff can say Topic A, B, C were the three most searched up on topics, or downloaded journal articles most visited posters, etc. Staff can share with AMB, journal editors, education dept, webinars, etc.
- **Delivery Mechanisms** – how we get things out to people. Working on video. Want bite size content. Working on small snippets of video.
- **Personalization** – key for APS. Working on new demographics and will use this to better target member's interests. Have new software that will link back to what members' search on. Will be a game changer in marketing plan and value proposition.

ACTION: All Council members to electronically sign the Whistleblower and Conflict of Interest forms that will be sent to them via DocuSign.

E. ICO/CALs Annual Committee/Board Report Summary (Bradeen/Gent/Gallup/Everhart)

RECEIVED report summary from ICO and CALs. A copy of both reports are posted to the Council Collaborative site in the October 2021 meeting folder.

ICO Report:

As of Sept. 17, 2021, there were five committees/boards who had not submitted a report for 2021.

- 2026 Professional Development Forum (last report submitted in 2020)
- APS Historian (last report submitted in 2020)
- Divisional Forum (last report submitted in 2020)
- Nominations Committee (last report submitted in 2019)
- OPRO (last report submitted in 2020)

Active boards this past year.

AULF is considering adding a second membership meeting in January or February if APS Council may want a Council representative at these meetings. Already have Councils on AULF so shouldn't be a problem.

CALs Report:

Committees functioning quite well, and the LI training has helped.

Several items that warrant discussion by Council were centered on:

- Developing an APS website focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion-related content;
 - DEI materials need to be more visible on the APS website.

ACTION: Staff to post a DEI button on website header and work with CDEI task force for content. (Dominika Kuzlak-Swanson staff liaison)

- SciSoc is using a reporting system for member misbehavior at an APS meeting or Division meeting where members can report anonymously on bad conduct or experiences and have a system in place to investigate. System will be included in Plant Health 2022 contract.
- Priorities for public policy and advocacy;

- Forest pathology request, PPB to respond to initiative request. Encourage them to reach out to PPB and be proactive with requests. Suggest Rick invite Forest Pathology Chair to be invited to a call to present their request.
- More formalized industry mentoring and networking
 - Portal to submit interest to mentor and students seeking mentoring from industry. Recommend committee to propose an industry mentoring activity that APS can support. Encourage they have a conversation with AULF and Grad Student Committee and encourage they understand the different events that APS holds.
- Strategies for liaising with the Mycological Society of America (MSA).
 - Mycology Cmte request. See if there are members who are a MSA members and have them connect back to Mycology committee. APS does not meet regularly with MSA.

F. Finances (Rood/Datnoff)

RECEIVED August financial statement.

The net profit from operations for the two months ended August 31, 2021, was \$10,614, which is \$254,712 better than budget and (\$92,329) worse than prior year. The YTD gains on investments were \$218,552 which generated a total net profit after investments of \$229,166.

Total YTD revenue was \$599,563 which was better than budget by \$34,520, and worse than prior year by (\$107,638). Monthly submissions and paper acceptances continue to be closely monitored and tracked. Journals are favorable to budget by \$44K driven by page and color charges. Grow-PHE is favorable to budget by \$5K. PHP/PDMR is favorable by \$15K driven by author publication charges. APS Press is missing budget by (\$21K) driven by lower book income.

Total YTD operating expenses were \$588,949 which is \$220,192 better (lower) than budget and \$15,309 better (lower) than the prior year. Total payroll is favorable to budget by \$74K and total personnel expenses are favorable by \$134K. Remaining favorability to plan was driven by lower spend in publications \$24K and administration \$32K.

All business centers are showing net profit favorable to budget.

RECEIVED preliminary Annual Meeting statement.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. Central.

Thursday, October 7, 2021

Meeting was called to order at 11:01 a.m. Central.

Council present: Amy Charkowski, Ron Walcott, Nik Grunwald, Mark Gleason, Jim Bradeen, Lawrence Datnoff, David Gent, Sydney Everhart, Ashok Chanda, Krishna Subbarao

Council apologies: Courtney Gallup

Guest: Jim Meffert

Staff: Amy Hope, Carol Ericson, Greg Grahek, Erik Uner, Linda Schmitt, Kurt Rood, Eric Fletty, Megan Boatman, Jessica Egyhazi

A. The future of plant science APS Council Discussion (Meffert)

A copy of today's slides are saved to the Council collaborative site.

Think of the environment affecting our members? What do we know about those and what can we do, what can we learn and bring together? Needs of our members are and the needs of science in the future and research, products and services, and how everything is connected?

Building on input from strategy sessions that happened in September.

SHARED high impact trends across arenas of change.

- Collaboration is increasing on multiple levels (research, learning, institutional, individual, not restricted by past boundaries)
- Data is the wild west – inconsistency is limiting the potential impact. Generating data is easier but collecting it in a usable format is a challenge.
- Communication is easier to execute, more challenging to deliver effectively, and essential to effective collaboration and distribution of knowledge.
- Funding for projects and programs will be more challenging to obtain and require new and unique sources of funding. Funding will also focus on basic questions rather than uncertain applications.
- Technology is changing the way we do research, learn, interact, apply our work.
- Increasing diversity is a reality and exciting (diversity on multiple levels, perspective, background, knowledge foundation, geography, etc.)

ADD training to list. Students and employers are expecting something different than universities have historically provided, as are deans versus graduate student mentors. (Less emphasis on discipline, more integrative; “Soft skills”: comms, teamwork, public engagement).

Key Drivers of Change in Plant Science:

- The impact of Climate Change
- Evolving Technology
 - Research
 - Communications
- Availability and Utilization of Data
- Pressure on Funding Models
- Increasing Diversity and Collaboration
- Trust in Science (public, customers, key stakeholders)

Discussion on Impact on Plant Science/APS Members:

- Transdisciplinary skills and cross-cultural competencies
- Funding (not enough to support students or justification to teach graduate courses)
- Evolving pressures on the education and funding module.
 - Need for more federally funded scholarships for graduate education.
 - Better alignment with industry needs.
 - Ensuring students are prepared for careers in the private sector (soft skills like collaborating across institution.
 - Can be complicated to evaluate an individual’s contribution on a team.
<https://www.mygreenlab.org/>
 - Need to hold conversations with funding agencies to make this shift as they are the drivers.
 - Funding drives team makeup.

- How persistent are the teams after the grant ends?
- Collaboration accelerator role needed – APS could be a connector?
- Need impact statements that we can share with our legislators.

Implications for Plant Science:

- Climate Change
 - Are their unique impacts on plant science and things we should recognize and where APS could have impact? Need for impact statements that can be used at local/regional/state/federal levels.
 - New pandemics
 - Make sure we're always at the table for plant evasive/pest disease discussions.
 - Better at communicating the why and value.
 - Economics of agriculture - impact on a particular disease; hard to get data sometimes.
 - Reach out to ERS
 - Speaker ideas:
 - Jim Harrell (spelling?), modeler on climate change mitigation
 - Weed Grow – group of HR people from big ag companies – DEI related issues
 - Green labs – individual labs impacting climate change
- Data
 - PDMRs seems to be a good place to start for requiring OA of data.
 - Previously tried to get funding and was unsuccessful.
 - Phytoviews for a meeting session?
 - Modify instructions to journal authors and ask them to deposit this data and see what kind of response we get and then proceed from there.
 - Education and working with larger teams in other ways.
 - PD feature article on data sharing and its value for plant pathology – discussed need for someone to lead the writing.
 - Lack of graduate training as well as industry in this area.
 - APS could provide workshops/courses year-round
 - Data Camp-style
 - <https://carpentries.org>
- Technology
 - Changes so rapidly in genomics and in other areas. Imbedded and integrated in everything.
- Diversity and Collaboration
 - Participants and science will be more diverse
 - Social justice
 - persistent call for accountability
 - How best to meet the needs of all stakeholders?
- Lack of trust in science
 - If society understood the importance of what we do, it would be easier to influence funding decisions and increase the impact of our results.
 - Need better communication skills – talk in an engaging manner.
 - Encourage people to work in teams.
 - Better speaking skills can be taught online. Hard to advocate for anything if you are an ineffective communicator

- Need influencers in plant pathology
- Course on speaking/presentation skills that APS could offer.
 - 3-minute thesis/competition, grad schools offer this already.
- Competition – Emmy for best video or presentation – would need to be at right level for general public. Viral plant pathology presentations
- Two main issues:
 - Communication Skills
 - Messaging/marketing (consistent)

Expectations/Timeline:

- Deeper dives on issues and invite other stakeholders over the next couple of months. What could change with current programming that will lead us to bigger shifts and setting goals for the organization in the spring.
- Reassess mission/vision in spring along with budget discussions (hopefully in person meeting).

Meeting adjourned for the day at 2:00 p.m. Central

Friday, October 8, 2021

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

Council present: Amy Charkowski, Ron Walcott, Nik Grunwald, Mark Gleason, Jim Bradeen, Lawrence Datnoff, David Gent, Krishna Subbarao, Ashok Chanda, Sydney Everhart (late arrival)

Council apologies: Courtney Gallup

Staff: Amy Hope, Carol Ericson, Greg Grahek, Erik Uner, Linda Schmitt, Kurt Rood, Eric Fletty, Joann Lynch, Jessica Egyhazi, Megan Boatman

A copy of today's slides are saved to the Council collaborative site.

A. Status of Journal Program (Grahek/Subbarao)

Since July, APS Staff has published 12 temporary issues. APS Staff is still challenged by the failings of our long-term composition vendor. There is improvement, but APS headquarters is still posting temporary issues and we have asked the vendor for further discounts.

- KGL has published 5 full-text permanent issues.
- APS has added an additional vendor – Aptara will be publishing Q1 issue of *PhytoFrontiers*.
- APS has negotiated discounts with our composition vendor (KGL).
- APS has been working with an attorney.

SHARED where we are today for each journals.

NOTED our submissions are still positive, up slightly year-over-year through September, just over 2% and our acceptances are strong, up over 8%. Our anchor journals (*Plant Disease* and *Phytopathology*) have grown this year, despite our compositor breakdown. Our editing queue is as current as we have been in more than 12 months.

NOTED sincere thanks and shoutout of support from APS Council to publications staff for their above and beyond work.

Looking ahead:

- We are planning additional author, reviewer, reader communications.
- We will develop a discount strategy for authors impacted by the KGL slowdown.
- We will assess Aptara in Q4 relative to KGL to determine next steps for our other journals. If KGL does not improve, we will bring on a third vendor and split out additional journals from KGL.
 - Going forward we'd always have two vendors to go through. By December should make a decision on 3rd vendor.

Progress with Aptara (based in U.S. and composition down in India):

- **August:**
 - Met with Aptara clients and negotiated contract
 - Launch meeting with both sets of staff
- **September:**
 - 10 articles went into their editing queue and template development begun
 - Assessed editing quality
- **October:**
 - Production dashboard ready
 - ScholarOne integrated with Aptara
 - Aptara's staging on our Atypon site — testing of composition on our platform

Updates from the Editors-in-Chief (EIC):

- Reviewer Workshop webinar on Tuesday had several hundred attendees.
- Mary Burrows' Board approvals are underway in advance of their December orientation meeting.
- Our EICs, with staff are implementing a PD notes model for publication of Resource Announcements.
- We have applied for "ahead of issue" integration into Web of Science.
- Assistant Feature Editors are all doing work now to support the journals.
- *Phytopathology* is planning a survey to identify major breakthroughs in plant pathology to identify topics for review articles.
- Several Focus issues are, published, underway, or planned for the coming years.
- APS PRESS is adding *Essential Plant Pathology* to the APS Journal platform with links to the APS Education Center and eReader capability which includes annotation capabilities for students. Working on pricing and doing demos this month. Will promote for spring semester classes.

Journal Focus Issues Update:

- How do plants engage with beneficial microorganisms while at the same time restricting pathogens? (2021 *MPMI*)
- Population Genomic- and Phylogenomic-Enabled Advances to Increase Insight into Pathogen Biology and Epidemiology (2021 *Phytopathology*)
- Managing Stubborn Oomycete Plant Pathogens (Q3 2021 - *Plant Health Progress*)

- Role of the Abiotic Environment on Interactions between Plants and Microbes (Jan. 2022 - *MPMI*)
- *Candidatus Liberibacter* Pathosystems (Jan. 2022 – *Phytopathology*)
- Diagnostic Assay Laboratory (Q2 or Q3 2022 - *PhytoFrontiers*)
- Phyllosphere (Q4 2022 *Phytobiomes*)

B. Status of Member Engagement

SHARED trends over the last two years. Focus is what we know and trends in communication and what we're seeing.

1. Membership analysis (Fletty)

- Total members as of June 30 (fiscal year end) is 3974. Membership appears to have flatlined from the declines due to COVID. Membership appears positioned to grow in the future.
- Early Career membership has nearly doubled! Student memberships are trending up slightly. Suggested looking at membership attendance and see if that is a cause for an increase in membership.
- Sustaining Associate (SA) Membership is declining, even before COVID. Currently have seven sustaining associate members, with several of them with 30+ years of membership.
 - **NOTED** we should advertise the tenure on these companies and thank them for their support. Also look at previous companies that dropped that previously had long tenures. I wonder if value of listing companies as a sustaining member goes beyond the few thousand dollars. Perhaps an option is that a certain level of support results in sustaining member so that our list of members looks impressive.
 - Mid-career internship in this area?
 - Some crossovers with Industry Committee amongst SA members.
 - Suggested we could package corporate journal access.
 - Can also look at sponsorship and SA
- Renewal rates for APS are very strong. FY21 had 673 new members.
- New metric is New Member Conversion is the percentage of new members that renewed for a second year of membership. Best practice is 50-60% of new members renewing. Will be a focus area with our growing early career members that we keep them interested.
- Spread of Age – touching almost equally with gender and age. Starting to see non-binary
 - Total Int'l members (as of FY '21): 1233
Total with gender demographic: 1135 (92%)
Female: 347 (31%)
Male: 788 (69%)
Note other gender (non-binary) are both USA.

2. Member communication (Egyhazi)

- Shared current marketing channels.
- Major marketing campaigns – annual meeting, education/training, membership
- Industry standards are 18% for open rate on emails and click-to-open rate at 14.1%.
- Do better with member engagement than industry standards. Our emails result in registrations.
- Social media continues to grow.

ACTION: Jessica to forward information on social tagging to Council.

- Higher Logic Online Community – really good results to date. 53 committees and divisions opted in. 514 unique logins, 107 total threads, 147 total discussion posts.
 - Goals is to have a staff member honed into data and doing social listening and act on.
 - CALs to share this information with committees.
 - Open members forum launching is Nov. 1. Forum will be called **APS Commons**. All current members automatically enrolled. Staff is working with Morgan Carter and other volunteers to begin generating seed questions to get conversations going. Volunteers will guide and engage in conversation threads (ongoing). Seeking help from APS Council to get engaged!
 - Noted that anonymous posting is turned off for all communities now. **CONSENSUS** we will leave it off (as it currently is). As the forum gets up and running, we can certainly reassess should you all feel that the need should arise. **NOTED** We have community rules and guidelines for respect that people have to sign the first time they log on. They are also visible for future reference.
- Over the last year we have made concerted efforts to consolidate and streamline communications across the SciSoc departments that serve APS.
 - Digital Content Coordinator will be hired at SciSoc.
- Member communications continue to move from benefit-driven messages to value-driven messaging.

3. Program Assessment – Webinars, Online Courses (Lynch)

- Courses: Kicked off in August with Research Ethics course that Mark and Leonor are leading. Going well overall. Course meets one hour a week every Tuesday for 14 weeks. Set at a cap for 30 people. Had 27 registrants. Noted international attendance is sketchy, noted will work more closely with them going forward.
- Webinars: trend was fewer webinars this year, however we appear to have gained an idea of topics that gain a larger attendance.
 - Trend is seeing members are the largest audience and students and early career make up approximately 40% attendance each year.
- Noted that Compendium webinar had a large international viewing for on demand.

4. Program Assessment – Workshops (Boatman)

- Held 7 virtual workshops in 2020 (419 total attendees) and 6 virtual workshops in 2021 (total TBD).
 - Onsite was an additional ticketed item, for virtual it was benefit of registration.
- Members are the largest audience in 2020. Students and Early Career comprise 50% of workshop attendees, but 30% of the APS membership. Free access is incredibly attractive for attendees.
- Revenue was close to \$8K
- In 2020, live participants attracted more participants than On Demand attendance views.
- Content Trend: hands-on learning of software and technology used to process data and analyze research findings is in high demand.

5. Plant Health Assessment (Boatman)

- APS members consistently make up the majority of attendance numbers.
- 2020's basic free registration attracted a significant increase in nonmembers and members
- Paid nonmember attendance is higher for virtual meetings than in-person.
- Domestic vs intl. attendee trend: the meeting attracts a significantly higher number of domestic attendees than international. Proportion of domestic vs. international has stayed consistent whether in-person or onsite.
- Both student and early career percentages are at their highest in recent years. Suggests a decrease in the proportion of mid/late career professionals in attendance.
- Industry participation: industry sponsorship of programming was on the rise pre-virtual. Curating their own sessions has been more attractive to sponsors than sponsoring existing sessions in the virtual environment. Proportion of industry attendance is falling. Saw good attendance in these sessions.
- Plant Health 2021 trend: live attendance is far more popular than on demand. Domestic attendees were by far the largest group viewing on demand, however the percentage of international on demand views doubled percentage of attendance population. Keynote sessions were the most popular to attend live and view on demand, but Technical Session on demand viewing was greater than that of Special Sessions.
- Committee week and society updates had high virtual attendance and low in person attendance.
- Networking decreased in importance during virtual conferences.
- Virtual/In Person preferences Trends:
 - After 2021, attendees clearly indicated they are eager to return to in-person meetings, however some program elements were rated as being beneficial to continue in virtual format.
 - Committee Week and Society Updates received both highest "fully online" rating, and the lowest "in-person only" ratings.
 - Networking Events were rated highest for "in-person only" and lowest for "fully online."
 - Keynotes and Special Sessions had highest rating for hybrid online/in-person formats.

Meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m. Central.