Candidate for Vice President / Darin Eastburn

Bayer Crop Sciences and University of Illinois (emeritus)

Leadership Experience

I have been serving APS in a range of roles since 1982, and these experiences have given me an appreciation for the diversity of activities undertaken by APS members and staff. I began serving on several subject matter committees, eventually serving as the chair of the Teaching Committee. As I gained experience, I served as a member of several boards and offices, including the Office of Education and the Office of Public Affairs and Education. As an early adopter of electronic technology, I joined the Electronic Technology Advisory Group (ETAG), which developed the first version of APSnet, and I was the chair of ETAG before it became the Office of Electronic Communications (OEC). Continuing as the director of OEC, I oversaw a major upgrade of the APSnet platform, resulting in a substantial increase in the capabilities of the system on which the society now depends.

My experience in leadership positions includes a wide variety of service to the society and related organizations. In 2016, I served as president of the APS North Central Division and organized the division's annual meeting. I have served on the APS Governance Subcommittee, the Plant Management Network Evaluation Task Force, and the Centennial Planning Committee, where I coordinated the Centennial Oral History Project. Outside of APS, I have served as the chair of the International Society of Plant Pathology Teaching Committee and six years as a member of the North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Administrative Council.

Supporting APS publications and electronic communications is where the majority of my leadership efforts have been focused. I served as an associate editor for *Plant Disease* and regularly as an ad hoc editor for the society's journals. I was the first APSnet features editor, serving two terms. I was a senior editor for APS PRESS, advanced to associate editor-in-chief, and just stepped down from my second term as editor-in-chief. As APS PRESS EIC, I championed our move into the electronic publication of books and other products, such as the APS Image Database, the online protocols series, and the progressive compendia workflow. I also served as a member of the APS Financial Advisory Committee, which has given me a good understanding of the financial workings of the society, and as a member of the Publications Board. With this diversity of service and experience, I have developed a thorough understanding of the complexity of APS, how it functions, and the challenges we have before us.

Statement of Vision for APS

APS has been my professional home for almost four decades. The society has provided mentors, role models, opportunities for collaboration and networking, leadership training, and exposure to ideas and people that have shaped who I am as a professional and as a person. APS is an essential physical and virtual place for plant pathologists and affiliated plant scientists to gather, exchange knowledge and ideas, and advocate for the science of plant health to help meet the challenges that our world is facing. The mission and vision of APS are realized through our global community of scientists discovering and disseminating credible and beneficial knowledge of plant systems and plant health. Our scientific work is more important now than ever.

The coronavirus pandemic; global climate change; changing political and social landscapes; research, education, and business resource constraints; and changing expectations for publication and other forms of information delivery have set important challenges before us. Advances in plant pathology impact our ability to feed a hungry planet and improve the health of people and the environment on which we depend. The revenue streams that have, up to now, allowed APS to undertake an incredible array of important and impactful activities and programs are changing. We will need to continue to adapt and innovate to increase the level of activity undertaken by our members. Supporting collaborations in and across research, education, industry, and public relations is crucial if we are to sustain the society as a vibrant and contributing part of the scientific community. For example, technology has allowed us to make our meetings more accessible to members from around the world, and we should explore opportunities to increase and improve the effectiveness of communicating with our colleagues and the public to promote and enhance the science of plant pathology.

I started my career as an extension specialist and researcher at the University of Illinois. A few years ago, I moved from academia to take a position as an information specialist with Bayer Crop Sciences. My new role is surprisingly similar to my former role as an extension specialist, with the goal of presenting valuable information on plant production and protection to agricultural producers and practitioners. I regularly rely on the relationships I have developed through APS to help me accomplish my goals and carry out my responsibilities. Having the chance to interact with colleagues in academia, industry, and government has given me a deeper appreciation for how we all rely on each other to accomplish our goals and promote our science. The interactions and collaborations of those working in various branches and segments of plant pathology provide the foundation that supports us all. Bringing in new members and retaining mid-career members to foster those interactions are crucial to the future of our society. Engaging more with undergraduate students can help us acquaint potential new members with the benefits and activities of APS. Improving our science also involves being more inclusive and creating a welcoming environment for all of our members. These undertakings will help ensure that our society grows and remains vibrant and engaging for our members. I have been working to further the mission of our APS community for many years, and I am committed to sustaining and enhancing our science to meet the challenges we are facing now and in the future. ■

Candidate for Vice President / Karen Garrett

University of Florida

Leadership Experience

I have led a research lab at the University of Florida since 2000 and, earlier, a lab at Kansas State University, advising graduate students and post-doctoral scientists, engaging with undergraduate researchers, and teaching graduate and undergraduate courses. More information about the lab is available at garrettlab.org. In this work I've been a PI and co-PI on grants funded by agencies such as USDA NIFA, USDA APHIS, NSF, DOE, USAID, and CGIAR. The great work of people in my lab was recognized when I was elected an AAAS Fellow. I've also led and participated in many university committees at the department and college level.

With APS, I've served on several committees, and chaired committees for Epidemiology and Tropical Plant Pathology, as well as participating in the Emerging Pathogens Initiative. I and members of my lab have presented several workshops at national and regional APS meetings over the years. I've worked as an associate and senior editor for *Phytopathology*. I've also worked as an editor for *Applied and Environmental Microbiology* and for *Annual Review of Phytopathology*.

My lab has presented workshops on R, statistical applications in agriculture, and/or systems analysis, in several countries, including Bolivia, Haiti, Kenya, the Netherlands, Vietnam, and the United States. We are working toward making all the code from our analyses publicly available in R packages, with two packages currently available (INA and seedHealth).

With FAO, I've contributed to three commissions: 1) genetic resources for food and agriculture: climate change and agricultural microbes; 2) risks from climate change for invasive species; and 3) data quality for crop disease studies. With IPCC, I've been a contributing author for the Food Production and Food Security Chapter of AR5. For proposal reviews, I've served on panels, including the following: NSF Microbial Observatories, NSF Ecology, NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement, USDA Plant-Microbe, and USDA CAR/RAMP.

Statement of Vision for APS

I'm excited about the opportunity to continue building APS, strengthening the support APS offers to its members and its contributions to global food security and wildland conservation.

Diversity: In the United States, I would develop more APS relationships with institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Universities, and Tribal Colleges and Universities. For example, we could provide support for students to participate in APS meetings and explore other options in consultation with faculty at these institutions.

Global Community: When the APS Annual Meeting went online due to COVID-19, I talked to colleagues in South America and Africa about the opportunity to participate virtually. I learned that even a small registration fee was a limiting factor for scientists to participate. I would like to develop other possibilities for participation by scientists in low-income countries, perhaps through institutional registration (or national society registration) that would allow all students at an institution to participate or through donor sponsorship of participation by scientists in low-income countries. I would also like to develop options for programs to foster interactions among scientists interested in plant pathology in particular geographic regions. I'm particularly interested in developing synergies with sister societies.

Global Private Industry: Especially because private industry has the best organizational structures in many countries, engagement with private industry will strengthen APS and global commodity organizations. I will develop opportunities for engagement with these organizations globally.

Providing Beneficial Information: We published a paper in *Phytopathology* in collaboration with philosophers about how to make research as beneficial as possible (Garrett et al., 2020), and I think about these ideas when developing my research and teaching program. There are ideas in this paper that I would develop further in the APS community, as well, strengthening the societal benefits of plant pathology research.

Exchange of Knowledge: I would like to work to develop more APS videos aimed at the public, policy makers, and other scientific communities. I'd be interested in "hosting" a video series with interviews of plant pathologists and other scientists and public figures, addressing a range of areas of plant pathology and its impacts on society.

Promoting Scientific Communication: I would explore with APS members their interest in other ways to support communication beyond annual meetings. Building on the quality and reputation of APS publications is another priority.

Global Research/Teaching Collaborations: I've been developing a format for international research workshops at UF. This format links students in universities in the United States with students in low-income countries to work on research projects together as part of their coursework. I would also like to explore other opportunities for global capacity building in conversation with the APS membership and consider how APS can support teaching collaborations. The vision of a global surveillance system for plant disease (Carvajal et al., 2019) is inspiring to me, and I would like to work to support capacity building to help achieve global preparedness for plant disease management. ■

Candidate for Councilor-at-Large / Nicole Donofrio

University of Delaware

Leadership Experience

Volunteerism has always been at the forefront of my professional career. Since joining UD in 2006, I have engaged in service positions—some turned into leadership roles, and some opened doors to career paths I could never have imagined! Service has provided invaluable learning and teaching moments for me, and if only in small ways, I hope they have enhanced or enriched the lives of others.

Last year I was a rotating program officer with the Plant Biotic Interactions Program at the National Science Foundation, which was one of those paths I had never imagined. The position description held great appeal, so I applied and was fortunate to be selected! I helped shape research directions, learned from some of the brightest minds, and worked within and across divisions to engage in multidisciplinary research. I would not have had the courage or leadership skills to apply, had it not been for the extensive service opportunities and experiences I have gained through APS.

My service appointment at UD has grown significantly at the department, college, and university levels, with more recent positions being chair of our department's Promotion and Tenure Committee, director of graduate studies (2017–2020), associate chair (2018–2020), and the director lineage of our Microbiology Graduate Program, which I helped to shepherd through the academic pipeline in 2019. In 2018, I was accepted into LEAD21. This program was invaluable in more ways than I can list; suffice it to say, I apply these skills daily.

I have been highly engaged in APS activities since 2006, joining the Molecular and Cellular Phytopathology Committee and the Office of Public Relations and Outreach (OPRO), serving two terms. I have been through the presidential lineage for the APS Potomac Division and enjoyed being an active and engaged member of our regional division and supporting my students and post-docs to do the same. I received the Potomac Division's Volunteer Award, an extremely proud moment for me! Through APS, I have taken leadership workshops and been provided ample opportunities to hone my skills, including being a senior editor for *Phytopathology*, a member of the Divisional Forum, and the director of OPRO for two terms; knowing APS had enough faith in me to lead such an important charge, is to-date one of my proudest accomplishments. I rejoined UD in fall of 2021 and am looking forward to new volunteer opportunities with APS! Thank you for considering me for this important position!

Statement of Vision for APS

The American Phytopathological Society has become my professional and scientific home. I look to my colleagues for the latest advances in oomycete and fungal–plant interactions and for guidance on emerging diseases and the latest diagnostic techniques. It is also a home where we can really lean into innovative approaches to forging international partnerships and bringing awareness of plant pathology to the public. APS' strategic initiatives continue to excite me, including efforts in diversity, ensuring our journals are accessible and up to date, and striving to make all aspects of the society available online. APS clearly recognizes that online access serves individuals and communities that might not be able to engage, regardless of peaks and valleys in the pandemic. As councilor-at-large (CAL), I would be very excited to help this commitment continue.

More specifically, I am excited about supporting and enhancing virtual meetings. When I was director of OPRO, I learned strategies from board members for engagement and excitement in the virtual world. We have a chance to learn from each other right from the outset, rather than constantly having to reinvent the wheel. We can continue to share best practices for online learning in the classroom or at virtual meetings, through division meetings and the Divisional Forum. Further, I view this virtual experience as a path to even more inclusivity and diversity; I am a member of the APS Black Lives Matter Task Force and as a CAL, could move between committees, boards, and task forces to increase diversity both within the membership and through bringing new members into APS. For the first time I can recall, OPRO had a presence in fall of 2020 and 2021 at the virtual SACNAS meeting and made connections with several students. In 2020, our idea was to invite these students to APS Annual Meetings, paying for their expenses. I am excited to see whether this will occur in summer 2022! Given the opportunity to be a CAL, I could help synergize and coordinate efforts between boards and committees to contribute even more to DEI.

Completing my second term with OPRO this past fall gave me time to reflect on the 12 years I have spent on this board—six as a voting member and six as director. I love outreach and public engagement and have been consistently involved with it since my post-doc work in 2002. However, my time on OPRO and working with other boards and team members who serve on PPB and OIP, have demonstrated that these things can be achieved in myriad ways. I am particularly excited about international outreach; through some of my collaborations in China and Brazil, I could be helpful in liaising between OIP and APS Council, as a second- and third-year CAL. One example is something I noted during my two terms as senior editor for *Phytopathology*; we were able to nominate a student-led paper that we handled for Best Graduate Student Paper. While the one I nominated did not win, I observed a wide range of countries represented across the APS journals. As a CAL, there are opportunities to liaise with the OIP and Publications boards to increase the visibility of these prestigious awards. I can envision a path to maintaining excitement in international graduate students for APS, which would hopefully last their entire careers. ■

Candidate for Councilor-at-Large / Carrie Lapaire Harmon

University of Florida

Leadership Experience

My program focuses on plant disease diagnosis and management as director of the UF-IFAS Plant Diagnostic Center, bringing the best and most appropriate science to bear for our clientele while training the next generation of practitioners and scientists. My lab serves the Southern Plant Diagnostic Network, which I co-lead with PIs in 13 states and territories. Since I organize the annual SPDN regional meetings and I am also a member of the APS Southern and Caribbean Divisions, I ensure the regional SPDN meetings coincide with APS division meetings, when possible, to encourage cross-participation in the APS scientific sessions and the SPDN workshops, benefitting both groups. Part of NPDN leadership since 2003, I have been honored to serve as NPDN executive director for the past three years, leveraging network support and enthusiasm to benefit diagnosticians in 70 labs across the United States. I have a keen interest in expanding diagnostic capacity at home and abroad and delivery of hands-on diagnostic training provides a natural segue into data sharing and regional collaborations. Through USDA-Foreign Agriculture Service (USDA-FAS) and USAID projects, I have conducted assessments of diagnostic capacity in eight countries and have trained diagnosticians from more than two dozen, building on successes with the NPDN, International Plant Diagnostic Network (IPDN), and past USDA-FAS projects.

The goal of my research program is to provide applied answers to plant disease problems identified through extension activities, in keeping with my focus as director of the Plant Diagnostic Center and PD of the SPDN. Many of these projects and activities represent multidiscipline and/or multistate collaborations that have resulted in publications in three of the major journals for plant pathology in the United States: *Phytopathology*, *Plant Disease*, and *Plant Health Progress*. An active member in APS since 2002, I have served on the Graduate Student, Diagnostics, Extension, Teaching, and Mycology Committees and have collaborated across the society to bring sessions and workshops to fruition with the encouragement of many mentors and colleagues. Many of those I watched with awe as a grad student have become colleagues and friends, a testament to the durability of connections made within society activities. Now, I pay that forward through mentoring and actively recruiting diverse new voices to help focus our society on the future of our science.

Statement of Vision for APS

Directing a large program requires some sacrifice, confidence, and the ability to develop, deploy, and update a strategy. In my case, it also required that I learn from my mistakes and balance project goals, personnel needs, and budgets. My leadership style has changed over the years as I have taken on more responsibilities and learned to serve the people in my program instead of trying to pull the program along. I enjoy finding ways to connect people and projects and find the thing that sparks someone's excitement that will carry them through a project. I have learned to listen between the words, so I can find the right fit for my students and staff, and I hire based on attitude, not skill set. We can build skills, but scientific curiosity and collaboration must be nurtured when we find it. This is the mentality I also use with NPDN and its many projects and efforts, all within a strategic plan that gets tweaked all the time and a budget that can't do it all but can be leveraged to get a lot done. I think this desire to find and grow the best in people is what can help keep the volunteer spirit of APS vibrant. I have had the privilege of coordinating and leading projects like the NPDN, the new Diagnostic Assay Validation Network, and international projects that bridge field-level diagnostics and applied disease management to molecular detection assay development and validation. This position and the facility I manage has enabled me to host meetings for industry and extension stakeholders to discuss hot-button agricultural issues and build coalitions that can solve the problems at hand. I am no stranger to balancing a meager budget nor making tough choices when serving the greater good still leaves us feeling like we've lost. However, I have weathered those times best when I can tap into diverse viewpoints to help me think it through. Keeping the APS Council well-embedded in the committees and efforts, both visibly and behind the scenes, is likely a lot of work, but I think it is vital, and I would be honored to be part of this effort. ■