



Internal Communications Officer (ICO) Annual Update on APS Boards and Committees

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October 2020

Section I: Summary of Board/Committee Reporting Activities

13 Committees and Board reporting by October 1:

- Academic Unit Leader Forum
- APS Foundation Board
- APS Historian
- Awards and Honors Committee
- Divisional Forum
- Financial Advisory Committee
- Leadership Institute Committee
- Office of Education
- Office of International Programs
- Office of Private Sector Relations
- Office of Public Relations & Outreach
- Public Policy Board
- Publications Board

3 Committee reports pending as of October 1:

- 2026 Professional Development Forum
- Annual Meetings Board
- Nominations Committee

Section II: Activities and Accomplishments (Highlights)

● **Academic Unit Leader Forum**

- In past 6 months AULF led a robust email discussion among members on remote teaching; conversation was summarized and sent to all AULF members
- AULF meeting held in conjunction with Plant Health 2020. 30 participants.
 - Overview of AULF mission and the 2019 AULF Meeting
 - Discussion that the member list for AULF (as provided by APS) is out of date; Jeffers offered to update the list. This effort will include land grant institutions and non-land grant institutions with plant pathology faculty. Bull to establish an ad hoc committee to reach out to known plant pathology faculty at non-land grant institutions.
 - Additional conversation about remote teaching and institutional responses to COVID more generally.
 - Discussion of pending changes in regulations of genetically engineered plants (led by Rubella Goswami)
 - Jeffers became Chair at the end of Plant Health 2020; Bonnie Ownley was elected Associate Chair. Committee approved accession plan by which Loren Giesler will become Associate Chair when Ownley assumes Chair.

● **APS Foundation Board**

- Financial summary:
 - 270 donors (6% of APS membership) contributed \$72,000 in FY20
 - At end of FY20, Foundation funds increased \$147,583 after expenditures
 - 31 students received named awards
 - Foundation paid for Plant Health 2020 registration of all 141 awardees
 - Foundation received ~\$6K during Plant Health 2020; compared to \$35K for a typical in person meeting
- Established Lafayette Frederick Award; pledged \$20K to match donations with goal of raising endowment to \$100K, providing annual awards of at least \$3K

● **APS Historian**

- Co-authored a paper on coffee rust as a case study of geopolitics in plant pathology for *Annual Review of Phytopathology* (2020. Vol. 58)
- A series of articles on plant pathology history for the MN Historical Society:
 - MNopedia: I have contributed an article on barberry eradication in Minnesota
 - Currently I am completing a biographical article on E.C. Stakman
- Serving as resource for APS divisional officers, staff and other members:
 - Aided APS Past-President Kira Bowen in her search for information on the history of the APS Caribbean Division
 - Frequent questions about appropriate storage and preservation of historical materials
 - Frequent requests for biographical information, historical documents, or a unique historical photograph.

- As possible, photocopied/scanned, photographic prints/negatives or electronic images are sent to the APS member and staff
- **Awards and Honors Committee**
 - Committee meeting held during Plant Health 2020
 - Working with Linda Schmitt and other APS staff, developed and execute a virtual awards ceremony; 700 people attended; Hosted an awardee party via Zoom
 - Planning virtual 2021 awards nomination review; scheduled for end of January
- **Divisional Forum**
 - Met quarterly (in person or virtually) to plan activities and share ideas
 - Participated in Careers 101 workshops at several Division meetings
 - Organized Plant Pathologists of the Future at Plant Health 2020; more than 100 participated in the live session
 - Implemented standard national meeting abstract requirements for Division meetings and adopted standardized meeting processes
- **Financial Advisory Committee**
 - Worked closely with APS Staff and Council to monitor financial position and provide counsel as needed
 - Provided monthly financial updates to Council
 - Met in March 2020 to review 2021 budget and finalize proposal (especially important given impacts of COVID-19)
- **Leadership Institute Committee**
 - Evaluation of LI mission and alignment with needs of APS members
 - Organized brainstorming session during Plant Health 2020 with APS President Lindsey du Toit, APS Staff, and others to discuss:
 - Supporting incoming committee chairs to ensure continuity
 - Methods for delivering LI content beyond tradition training held in conjunction with the annual meeting
- **Office of Education**
 - Compiled resources for online/distance teaching at all grade levels
 - Developed new online teaching resources section on the APS website
 - Organized an APS webinar on online education
 - With APS Staff, continued to adapt the Ed Center site to meet visitor needs
 - Continued efforts to support undergraduate students:
 - Undergrad Task Force was approved to become a part of OE
 - At Plant Health 2020:
 - Online orientation
 - Booklet with meeting information and suggestions
 - Paired undergrads with graduate student mentors
 - With graduate students, conducted an online “scavenger hunt”
 - Continued the Professional Development Webinar Series
 - Several webinars are lined up for coming months
 - Initiated efforts to reevaluate the OE Mission and Vision to focus on aspects of education and teaching that OE is positioned to make meaningful impacts
- **Office of International Programs**

- Organized online plant disease photo contest and international cookbook as fundraisers (in lieu of silent auction)
- Established Facebook page for fundraising efforts
- Held Idea Cafe as part of Plant Health 2020. 25 participants. Led to creation of a Facebook group focused on Building Global Plant Pathology Educational Networks
- Library Assistance/Donation Program donated 44 books and CDs to the Scientific Research Council Library in Jamaica; highlighted in Phytopath News
- Awards: Four \$500 awards given in through the Books for the World program (recipients from Morocco, Cameroon, Pakistan, and Jamaica); Dr. Mathews Paret (University of Florida) selected as Jane Award winner; International Travel Award was given to Dr. Faheem Uddin Rajer (Pakistan)
- Organized two IYPH webinars to be delivered in fall 2020
- **Office of Private Sector Relations**
 - Planned activities (hosting a tour of industry sites and funding/facilitating experiential travel awards to visit local industries) were tabled due to COVID-19; these objectives were rolled forward as goals for the next 12 months, as possible
 - Co-facilitated the “Industry Career Panel, Hosted by CORTEVA” session at Plant Health 2020
- **Office of Public Relations & Outreach**
 - Participated in National Association of Biology Teachers and the Future Farmers of America annual meetings, using these venues to promote APS educational resources, distribute lesson plans and materials, distribute information about careers in plant pathology, etc.
 - Re-tooled info booth for future meetings; to roll out in 2021
 - Conducted Membership Outreach Analysis (Gap Analysis) Survey
 - 54 plant pathology-related departments contacted
 - 74% response rate
 - Analysis revealed: lack of funding and time to be main impediments to engaging in more outreach
 - Assisted IYPH task force with creation of “Careers in Plant Pathology” flyer
- **Public Policy Board**
 - In recognition of IYPH:
 - Hosted two briefings on Capitol Hill on plant health topics
 - Participated in a reception held for Congressional representatives at the US Botanical Garden
 - Engaged APS members via call-to-action to promote support for the America Grows Act
 - Promoted a multi-agency Plant Health Initiative Funding Package, including generation of a whitepaper distributed to 30 Congressional offices and 10 federal agencies
 - In support of training of forest pathologists:
 - Recruited leadership for a Forest Health Initiative

- Co-coordinated a Forest Pathology workshop to initiate a roadmap to halt reductions in forest pathology training programs
 - Published a *Phytopath News* article
 - In support of research infrastructure:
 - Continued to advocate for living culture collections, an effort resulting in a new USDA-ARS curator position
 - Continued to highlight the critical role of the National Plant Diagnostic Network with legislators
 - Submitted comments to federal agencies on several issues related to plant pathology
 - Joined with other organizations in providing letters of support for NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program, the America Grows Act, AFRI funding, agricultural research funding, and science funding in general
 - Conferred “Friend of PPB” Award to Michelle Bjerkness
 - Published 13 *Phytopath News* articles
- **Publications Board**
 - Continued efforts to transition MPMI to Gold Open Access
 - Launched *PhytoFrontiers*
 - Established partnership with Charlesworth Author Services to provide language editing services for APS journal authors

Section III: Plans for the Next 12 Months

- **Academic Unit Leader Forum**
 - Update membership lists (noted as a challenge)
 - Develop a strategy to reach out to plant pathologists at non-land grant institutions
 - Plans to meet quarterly to facilitate greater cross-institutional dialog
- **APS Foundation Board**
 - Continued fundraising for Lafayette Frederick Award
 - Leveraging general endowment funds as matches to promote giving to named awards, with goal of reaching 30 named awards with value >\$20K during FY21
 - Continue to promote Amazon Smile as a fundraising mechanism
- **APS Historian**
 - Continued promotion of APS and plant pathology history through publications
 - Continued contribution to the MN Historical Society and other popular-level outlets
 - Contribute history articles to the APS Education Center
 - Continue to work with archivists at Iowa State University to digitize and make available the many reel-to-reel tapes in the APS Collection
- **Awards and Honors Committee**
 - Planning for virtual 2021 awards nomination review; scheduled for end of January
 - Work with 2021 awardees to develop award materials for Plant Health 2021
- **Divisional Forum**
 - Continued development of Division meeting SOPs
 - Propose Plant Pathologists of the Future for Plant Health 2021
 - Work collaboratively to write a Phytopath News article promoting and reporting Division activities
- **Financial Advisory Committee**
 - Continue to work with APS Staff to provide strategic input
 - Continue to monitor issues of likely financial significance for FY21:
 - COVID-19 impacts
 - Sale of HQ building
 - Journal transitions to Gold Open Access
 - Annual Meeting modalities
- **Leadership Institute Committee**
 - Meeting monthly to continue effort to “re-invent” LI with the following objectives:
 - Supporting APS leadership
 - Providing training or tools for smooth leadership transitions
 - Cost-effective approaches to delivering training that align with member’s preferences
 - Investigate partnerships with other APS committees to develop an APS mentoring program
 - Prepare a proposal for Council review on how to position LI to meet above objectives
- **Office of Education**

- Conduct survey of APS members to determine educational and professional development interests and needs
- Continue to refine OE mission and vision
- Continue monthly webinars
- Continue to enhance the Professional Development Center website
- Continue to make distance/online educational resources available and accessible
- Continue to support the Ed Center
- Develop a plan for online professional development resources
- **Office of International Programs**
 - Towards building a global plant pathology education network:
 - Identify an organizing committee
 - Develop a survey for global education needs related to this network
 - Host a special session or Idea Cafe on network design and implementation at Plant Health 2021
 - Continue award and fund-raising activities
- **Office of Private Sector Relations**
 - As possible, pursue in person objectives planned for 2020 (but curtailed due to COVID-19):
 - Midwest Experiential Tour
 - Individual and Departmental Experiential Award for interaction with local industries
 - Conduct a social media “take-over campaign” of APS channels
- **Office of Public Relations & Outreach**
 - Attend National Association of Biology Teachers and SACNAS conferences
 - Launch *OPRO Meets...* monthly article in *Phytopath News* to highlight outreach activities by APS members
 - Led an IYPH workshop on scientific communication in December 2020 or January 2021
 - Planning an in person scientific communication “pitch” event (e.g., Pitch120) for Plant Health 2021
 - Continue to work with Plantingscience.org to create modules for use by teachers with an emphasis on tree health; coordinate with OE on this effort
- **Public Policy Board**
 - Continued interaction with federal agencies including USDA-ARS, USDA Office of Pest Management Policy, USDA-NIFA, EPA, FDA, USDA-APHIS and with federal legislators and appropriators
 - Continue to monitor changes in agricultural research funding (NIFA, NSF, and DOE) and related Congressional action related to the Farm Bill or NPDN
 - Continue to educate APS members through articles in *Phytopath News*
 - Continue to alert APS members to changes in federal policy affecting plant health research and the integrity of our science
- **Publications Board**

- Position *PhytoFrontiers* for success (entails promotional and operational activities)
- Transition MPMI to Gold Open Access in January 2021
- Launch an award for best student papers in APS journals
 - **ICO NOTE:** requires input or review from Council?
- Working with journal editors, recruit senior graduate students and postdocs as Assistant Editors to train future generations of editors

Section IV: Requests/Action Items for Council

- **Academic Unit Leader Forum:** None listed.
- **APS Foundation Board**
 - Continued forgiving of expenses associated with staff time
 - Continued opportunities for Foundation to directly address membership during annual meetings
- **APS Historian:** None listed.
- **Awards and Honors Committee:** None listed.
- **Divisional Forum**
 - Requests AMB expand the Plant Pathologists of the Future session to 90-minutes, accommodating graduate student presentations for each of the six Divisions
- **Financial Advisory Committee:** None listed.
- **Leadership Institute Committee:** None listed.
- **Office of Education**
 - APS membership survey to assess educational and professional development needs/interests (**ICO NOTE:** unclear how Council can support this effort; warrants follow up with OE leadership)
 - Guidance on development of new OE Mission and Vision (**ICO NOTE:** consider Council discussion with OE leadership on this issue)
- **Office of International Programs:** None listed.
 - **ICO NOTE:** this report is very lengthy and confusing. OIP leadership might benefit from CALs input on this.
 - **ICO NOTE:** a lot of educational efforts are planned for the next year. Is OIP coordinating with OE?
- **Office of Private Sector Relations:** None listed.
- **Office of Public Relations & Outreach**
 - Work with Council to respond to member needs identified in gap analysis:
 - 52% seek help in form of funds or ready-to-use outreach materials
 - CORTEVA pledged financial support of a mini-grant effort
 - 55% seek additional materials and/or outreach ideas
 - **ICO NOTE:** propose to work with Jeannie Klein to develop work plan response to gap analysis ahead of Plant Health 2021
- **Public Policy Board**
 - PPB request Council feedback on the APS Public Policy Visioning Task Force report
 - PPB encourages Council and APS members to offer comment on the USDA-APHIS-BRS petition for nonregulated status of the blight-tolerant American chestnut tree
- **Publications Board:** None listed.