

**American Phytopathological Society**  
**Report from Council**  
**15 March 2006**  
**Gary Grove, Councilor of the Pacific Division**

Council met in Minneapolis Feb 23-25 and discussed many issues pertinent to our membership. All members of Council submitted reports styled to detail progress made in the APS Strategic Plan. The important aspects of discussion topics and progress areas are itemized below. Pertinent issues appear to reside in the areas of APS Journals, Public Policy, and upcoming annual meeting. The following report focuses heavily on APS Journals because they provide the majority of financial support for our society.

**I. APS Journals.** *Phytopathology.* There was a lengthy discussion after a presentation from Randy Rowe, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on the journal *Phytopathology*. The committee considered issues such as the advisability of broadening or shifting the editorial focus, whether relevant research in plant pathology is being published there, and what author-perceived barriers to publication exist. Below are listed the committee's recommendations to APS Council.

1. Continue *Phytopathology* as a broad-based journal of plant pathology rather than narrowing the editorial focus to a specific subject-matter niche.
2. Consider slightly broadening the focus to the journal to include related areas of relevance to *Phytopathology*.
3. While welcoming manuscripts with molecular-based studies, it would be unwise and likely unsuccessful to position *Phytopathology* to compete directly with *MPMI*.
4. Minor changes in *Phytopathology* could improve the ISI Impact Factor towards a goal of 3.
5. Broaden the perception of the journal as an international journal.
6. Address the unfavorable perception of editorial policies and attitudes that lead some to avoid publishing in the journal.

*Plant Disease.* A membership survey indicated that this journal is good shape and has a high satisfaction index.

*Plant Management Network.* Council identified the need to improve the financial stability of PMN at the 2005 Annual Meeting. Reduced reliance on USDA support was identified as a first step in the financial process.

- A new PMN Strategic Planning Board (Dennis Gross, Chair) has been charged with directing PMN and held its first meeting in February.

- Usage of PMN's online journals and electronic resources increased by 92% in 2005 to a total of over 180,000 visits.
- PMN launched Manuscript Central for manuscript submission and tracking in January, 2006.
- PMN has introduced Open Access
- PMN has partnered with USDA, resulting in the four PMN journals (*Plant Health Progress, Applied Turfgrass Science, Crop Management, and Forage and Grazinglands*) being indexed in Agricola, a major indexing resources of the National Agriculture Library.
- A process was initiated to consolidate *Fungicide and Nematicide Tests and Biological and Cultural Tests* into one online journal, *Plant Disease Management Reports*. This is being done largely to facilitate the searchability of these resources.

**Digitization.** Many of the bullet items listed below were presented to Council by Steve Kronmiller. Significant progress is being made in digitizing back issues of journals and those issues are being prepared for posting. Ten years of journal article scans for Plant Disease and MPMI have been received and should be posted on APS Net by June 2006. The progress on back issues of Phytopathology has been a bit slower, but the digitization of all journals should be complete by June 2010. The scope of the project is:

*Plant Disease:* Vol. 1 (1927) – Vol. 80 (1996)

60,120 pages; 16,000 articles

*Phytopathology:* Vol. 1 (1911) – Vol. 86 (1996)

96,000 pages; 23,000 articles

*MPMI:* Vol 1 (1988) – Vol 9 (1996)

5122 pages; 673 articles

- All APS articles are now available on a pay-per-view basis. Partial open access (open access after two years) to digital articles has been in place for most of 2005. Traffic to open access articles is increasing.
- A contract with Atypon for electronic enhancements to the journals has been signed. These significant journal enhancements are scheduled to “go live” in August 2006. The goal of this contract is to determine how to make the online versions of our journals more visible, useful, and attractive to students, researchers, authors, and libraries. The contract will provide content alerts, reference cross-linking, institutional usage statistics, etc. One advantage of movement in this direction is reference cross-linking: the ability to access digital journal articles (in- and outside of APS Journals) through clicking on the embedded reference (eg Grove, 2004) or the literature citation. To participate in Cross

Ref publishers must agree to link to all articles in the database to qualify for links from other publisher's journals. Thousands of journals participate across all the disciplines. Participating publishers and societies in the Cross Ref initiative include Elsevier, Annual Reviews, American Society of Agronomy, American Society of Microbiology, John Wiley, CABI, Blackwell, Crop Science Society, Springer Science and all the BioOne journals. Another spectacular feature is journal content organization. End users can manage journal information according to:

- Sort content by most read articles
- Sort content by most cited articles
- Sort content by author
- Add article address to favorites
- Email abstract or Table of Contents to colleague
- Add article reference to citation manager (EndNote, BibTex, ProCite, Medlars, Reference Manager).
- Cross-reference linking and Cross Ref
- Robust search and delivery interface
- Journal content organization
- Personalized research tools

Personalized research tools will permit the end user to

- Organize favorite titles and articles to create a personal library.
- Set alerts for specific searches of interest
- Set alerts to learn when articles cite an article of interest
- View saved searches
- Purchase content pay-per-view

The cost of Atypon services include \$43,500 (\$14,500 per journal) startup fee and an annual fee of \$48,000.

## **II. Activities of Public Policy Board (PPB).**

- PPB released a white paper on the teaching of evolution and intelligent design. APS supports the teaching of evolutionary theory and opposes teaching the concept of Intelligent Design. The reasons given for this position can be perused at <http://www.apsnet.org/media/ps/evolution.asp>
- PPB released a white paper on Microbial Genomic Sequencing Perspectives of APS in January 2006. This white paper is available at <http://www.apsnet.org/members/ppb/PDFs/MicrobialGenomicsSeq06.pdf>
- Stella Coakley has replaced John Sherwood as Director of PPB. Jackie Fletcher is Director-elect.

- Council recognized the efforts of Eversole Associates as invaluable to APS.

### **III. Activities of Office of International Programs (OIP).**

- The proposed “sister society” initiative has been implemented and progress with German and Israeli societies has been most rapid.
- Progress in the development of a Spanish version of the *Plant Health Instructor* has been rapid.

### **IV. Office of Electronic Communications.**

- APS Press has asked HQ to explore the feasibility of offering an affordable member subscription (price) to the APS Image Collection.
- OEC created a “blog” entitled “Live in Austin” that was online prior to and during the 2005 Austin meetings. Nearly 1,500 visits were experienced during the annual meeting.
- Gary Grove is developing a mean to distribute *Phytopathology News* using Podcasts.
- The email feature of the APS Placement Service grew by leaps and bounds 2005.
- OEC is considering a “facelift” for APSnet.

**V. Awards and Honors.** Council received from the Awards and Honors Committee a position opposing the recognition of graduate student awardees in the Awards and Honors Ceremony. After a brief discussion, Council unanimously felt that recognition of student awardees fostered excellence and benefited to the long-term viability of APS. Council voted to include student awardees in the ceremony but to recognize them early in the evening. Council concurred that including student awardees motivated all graduate students in plant pathology to strive for excellence.