

Public Policy Update

Nominations Requested for Public Policy Board Positions

The APS Public Policy Board (PPB) seeks nominations for two board member positions to serve a 3-year term, one each in the areas of plant-associated microbial genomics and agrochemical industry.

Plant-Associated Microbial Genomics Position

Recent achievements in plant and microbial genomics, shifts in funding priorities at federal agencies like the National Science Foundation and the USDA National Research Initiative, and APS membership feedback all place genomics as a high-impact and high-priority area for PPB. Genomics efforts have included organization of workshops directed toward defining scientific and funding priorities in the area of genomics, publication of workshop findings, and oversight of subject matter committee input into the APS Microbial Genome Sequencing Priority list. PPB has also discussed genomics initiatives with policymakers and funding agencies during midyear meetings in Washington, DC. The new member will focus primarily on encouraging continued funding for microbial genomics and increasing funding for functional genomics efforts in the area of plant-microbe interactions.

Agrochemical Industry Position

The crop protection industry faces increasing science policy challenges and APS PPB has been successful in bringing sound science to regulatory guidance and risk assessment processes. With the exception of soybean rust, there has been less and less interaction between APS and the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) on the availability of crop protection chemicals to combat crop diseases. There are numerous regulatory challenges that OPP will be facing in the near future with crop protection products now undergoing Registration Review to include new types of data on water quality, possible endocrine-disrupting compounds, and the impact of pesticides on endangered species. During this process and beyond, APS would like to be used as a resource for EPA and USDA in contributing data on real-life pesticide use and usage information for consideration as these risk assessments go forward. This information is especially important for the assessment of products critical in the production of minor crops. Having accurate information is the most important factor in the safe and environmentally responsible use of fungicides and other agricultural chemicals, and PPB strives to assist in providing information for educational efforts in these areas. APS could also be a source for information on the benefits of fungicides (and other pesticides) needed for risk-benefits analyses. The new PPB member's role will include interacting with the current industry member on PPB, the APS Office of Industry Relations, and leadership on the development of PPB input to national agencies on agrochemical issues; participating with PPB in midyear meetings in Washington, DC, to discuss initiatives with policymakers and funding agencies; and providing broad membership updates in presentations at the APS annual meetings.

Interested individuals for either of these positions should have 1) the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to address agricultural policy and regulatory issues, as well as adequate time, to address microbial genomics or crop protection concerns on behalf of PPB; 2) knowledge and experience with U.S. funding agencies; and 3) broad interest and experience in order to contribute to all PPB efforts. Additionally, we encourage applications from early to midcareer APS members who have an interest in public policy.

PPB requests submission of a short statement of interest and background (short CV) from members interested in serving APS as a PPB board member, **by March 30, 2008**. Please send these items to PPB Chair **Jacque Fletcher** at jacqueline.fletcher@okstate.edu. If you have specific questions about these positions, call Jacque at +1.405.744.9948. PPB will review submitted materials and make a recommendation to APS Council on the PPB appointment.

For more information on the PPB initiatives, visit www.apsnet.org/members/ppb/. ■

