2024 Vice President Candidate

Francesca Peduto Hand | The Ohio State University

Leadership Experience

I am a professor and Extension specialist in the Department of Plant Pathology at The Ohio State University, where I lead a teaching, research, and Extension program focused on the epidemiology, diagnosis, and integrated management of diseases affecting ornamental plants. I am passionate about student education, faculty mentorship, and involvement at all levels of my academic life. I firmly believe in the power of mentorship, kindness, and providing opportunities.

For as long as I can remember, I have strived to be an active participant of any group or organization of which I have been a part. This personality trait has taken different forms throughout my life and career, but in all circumstances, it has been driven by curiosity, a desire for challenge, and a passion for participating in decision-making processes. Dedicating my time to serve APS is no exception. Over my 16-year APS membership, I have served on several subject matter committees, including Integrated Plant Disease Management (2011–2014), Diseases of Ornamental Plants (2013–present; chair 2015–2016), Plant Pathogen and Disease Detection (2015–2018), Turfgrass Pathology (2015–2018), and Diagnostics (2017–2020). I have organized, fundraised for, and moderated workshops, special sessions, and field trips at different annual meetings. I also have served as editor for Plant.Disease.Management.Reports (2016–2021), and I am currently concluding my sixth year as a member of the Office of Public Relations and Outreach (OPRO). Wherever I have served, I have cultivated professional and mentoring relationships, developed long-lasting friendships, and found a powerful space for discussing pressing topics and developing new ideas.

While I am a learner by doing, I also believe there is a critical advantage to developing leadership skills before needing them. To this end, I invested time and effort in self-development by completing multiple leadership development programs, most recently LEAD 21 (2022–2023) and the OSU President and Provost Leadership Institute (2019–2020), to acquire and enhance competencies in all areas of leadership. Through these programs, I learned how to use my strengths more effectively and how to build trust among people, and I expanded my awareness of diversity and multicultural relationships. Gaining competence in these areas of leadership has had a direct effect on my practices, whether that

translated into leading my research team more effectively, spearheading initiatives in the governance of my department and institution or serving my professional organization.

My true passion lies in the coaching of others. In the last few years, I have contributed to developing initiatives geared toward mentorship of underrepresented minorities (URM). For example, I worked in partnership with three other female faculty members at OSU to develop a training program for faculty mentors and URM doctoral students to engage in culturally responsive mentoring. Our goal was to support mentors to develop the practices of culturally responsive mentoring and to support mentees to develop the skills needed to navigate the university system and prepare for future faculty careers.

I am deeply honored to have been nominated for the position of vice president of APS. I look forward to the opportunity to serve on the presidential team to continue cultivating my passions, building on my driving principles, and expanding opportunities for all members.

Statement of Vision for APS

I knew from an early age that my career would revolve around agriculture but never imagined that I would become part of such an incredibly impactful discipline. I am excited for the opportunity to promote a vision for APS that can help achieve its strategic goals.

Goal A: Advancements in plant health science are accelerated through professional collaboration and data sharing.

There is increased demand, from funding agencies to public users, for research to be more collaborative, interdisciplinary, and transparent. Data sharing fosters collaboration between researchers, results in a more efficient use of resources, produces solutions faster, and allows evaluation of results on a larger scale. APS has the opportunity to be at the forefront of this movement by providing a hub for a protocol repository and by increasing access to data to positively impact plant health. If elected, I would work closely with APS PRESS to expand its offerings of protocols and to increase transparency and accessibility of data and metadata through its journals.

I believe that research and Extension are intricately linked, and my vision for the role of APS is to continue strengthening their connection. No matter how fundamental the research questions that we ask are, we must translate knowledge into practical solutions, work effectively with industry and government to leverage our discoveries, and communicate our message effectively to diverse stakeholders. Increased collaboration between researchers, industry, and Extension professionals is one way that we can achieve this goal. APS is strategically well positioned to provide an arena for professional collaboration. Building on the many great initiatives that our society has spearheaded over the years and on the

diverse expertise of our members, I would work to expand opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

Goal B: A growing workforce has the skills necessary to ensure sustainable plant health.

The concept of plant health is inherently interdisciplinary. As the leading professional organization in the field of plant pathology, we have the opportunity to facilitate the training and professional development of the future workforce. I am interested in exploring collaborations with other scientific societies in related disciplines to identify curriculum-building opportunities and resources that we can leverage to ensure our trainees are well-rounded scientists. I envision our Plant Health meetings becoming epicenters of interdisciplinary discourse and collaboration. I also envision continuing to build on previous initiatives to make sure plant health information is easily accessible, diversified in its offerings, and available not just during annual meetings.

Goal C: Our science impacts decisions leading to a sustainable future.

Plant pathology is at the forefront of addressing global challenges. Our collective expertise can help mitigate the negative effects of climate change, protect our land from invasive species, promote environmental stewardship, and ensure food security and safety for a growing population. The sustainability of our future depends on our ability to generate sound scientific content, communicate our message effectively, and build public trust. By serving on the presidential team, I will work to strengthen the synergy between the APS Office of Public Relations and Outreach and the Public Policy Board to amplify the impact of our discoveries by informing and soliciting action of regulators, funding agencies, and policymakers.