

The APS Placement Service

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Approximately 10 years ago the American Phytopathological Society initiated the APS Placement Service. It was begun at a time when the APS leadership as well as the general membership had become aware of an increasing disparity between the number of job candidates and the number of jobs available. Employment opportunities were in short supply, and a clearinghouse was needed to help job seekers get together with prospective employers.

The APS Placement Service provides a useful service to both candidates and employers. All job candidates who apply are requested to provide a resumé and to indicate their work interests. All candidates are placed on a mailing list and periodically receive listings of new position openings that are filed with the Placement Service. Interested candidates contact prospective employers directly for those positions for which they are qualified.

A Placement Center is provided at each national APS meeting. Loose-leaf notebooks containing candidate resúmes are available for inspection by employers, and notebooks containing all job listings are available for perusal by candidates. All candidate resúmes are available unless a candidate wishes his or her resumé to be kept confidential. The Placement Center also maintains a bulletin board on which job listings are posted and messages are transmitted between candidates and prospective employers. The Placement Center assists candidates and employers in arranging a suitable time for interviews. Whenever possible, space for interviews is provided near the Placement Center. Both candidates and employers have found the interview space convenient, and many interviews are held during the course of the meetings.

The APS Placement Service has been widely used by APS members, for whom the service is free. A fee is charged nonmember candidates. There is no charge for job listings. More nonmember employers might wish to consider using this service when they need plant pathologists or staff in related fields. I would like to highlight the benefits that are accruing to the private sector, which has increased its use of the service.

Overseas employers who have not used the Placement Service should give it serious consideration. Some candidates are interested in international work, and some of these have had international experience. The demand for food and fiber production continues to rise on a worldwide basis, keeping pace with the rise in world population. Increased demand requires increased productivity, and stable high productivity can be accomplished only when major diseases are controlled and changing disease problems are monitored continuously. The APS Placement Service could become a clearinghouse for the

hiring of plant pathologists on an international basis. This mission is consistent with the international scope of the American Phytopathological Society.

During the past 10 years the APS Placement Service has served 908 candidates and 904 employers. There have been periods of imbalance, but over the years there has been a relatively good match between the number of candidates and the number of employers.

What has the Placement Service meant to users? Employers express gratitude at the number of well-qualified candidates to choose from and at the number of candidates available for interviews at the annual meetings. This has proved helpful to all classes of employers. Universities may have the best contacts for finding candidates but nevertheless use the service for finding qualified and interested candidates. I would encourage even greater use of the service as a means of assuring sufficient numbers of suitable candidates. Employers without university contacts will find the service especially useful. Frequently candidates who find employment through the Placement Service send letters of appreciation. These letters are common enough to indicate that the service works effectively for them. The service is invaluable to candidates with limited contacts who are unaware of the available positions. This was eminently true in my own case; after years of overseas service I had little access to information on positions available back in the United States.

Where do we go from here? In addition to continued hiring in the "traditional" areas of university, industry, and government sectors, I believe there are some areas emerging where the demands for plant pathologists could increase. This includes the private sector with its expanding demands for developing specialized new products and services. It also includes 4-year colleges where plant protection training is needed. Other rapidly expanding areas are private consulting and state-supported integrated pest management (IPM) scouting programs. The increasing opportunities in consulting appear to be primarily for candidates with a master's degree and broad experience in disease diagnosis and control and knowledge of such related fields as entomology, weed science, agronomy, and horticulture. The type of training needed is different from that traditionally provided in the past; some institutions are now addressing themselves to this new demand. There appear to be expanding opportunities for plant pathologists in extension, including employment in IPM programs and as regional or area specialists complementing the statewide specialists. These positions require personnel with broad applied training. Finally, there will be an increased need for plant pathologists on an international basis; whether demand will equal the need cannot be predicted.

No story of the Placement Service would be complete without mention of the capable work of the APS headquarters staff who labor tirelessly at the national meetings and throughout the year to make the service a success. Mrs. Dotty Ginsburg is the dedicated headquarters staff member in charge of the Placement Service. We owe a debt of gratitude both to Dotty and to the APS headquarters management for their commitment to this service!