

Constitution of the American Society of Plant Biologists
Early Career Plant Scientists Section
(Created January 2020)

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Early Career Plant Scientists Section, subscribing to the regulations and policies of the American Society of Plant Biologists, establish this Constitution to govern the matters within our section.

ARTICLE I

Name and Legal Identity

The name of this organization shall be the Early Career Plant Scientists (ECPS) Section of the American Society of Plant Biologists (ASPB). For shorthand reference this section shall be referred to as ECPS, or ASPB-ECPS.

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The main function of this section is to represent early career plant scientists within ASPB. We aim to accomplish this in three fundamental ways: 1) connecting and formalizing established early career leadership within ASPB, 2) creating a mechanism for transparent dialogue between that leadership and the broader early career membership, and finally 3) consolidating that dialogue to generate a cohesive early career platform to be voiced by the early career leadership to the rest of the ASPB governance. These steps will lead to greater representation of early career voices to the ASPB governance.

Secondarily, the ECPS section aims to elevate the visibility of ECPS activities, networking and training opportunities, and individual ECPSs within the society.

Overall, these aim for a continued and lasting synergy between members of the plant biology community and ASPB.

ARTICLE III

Membership

The definition of early career plant scientists, for the purposes of this document, shall herein be defined as an individual who is in sympathy with the purposes of this section, and is considered a student or within ten years of earning a high school, bachelors, masters, or doctoral degree within the life sciences. The ten year eligibility window resets with every subsequent degree conferred.

Article III: Sections:

1. All ASPB members, who meet the early career criteria above, shall be eligible for membership in the ECPS section.

2. Individuals eligible under the provisions of Section 1 of this Article shall be considered members upon payment of dues of five US dollars per calendar year.

ARTICLE IV

Meetings

1. General body meetings shall fall into two categories, with the place and time of these meetings determined by the Head of Internal Communications:
 - a. Executive Leadership meetings to be held monthly
 - b. ECPS Council meetings once every two months (bimonthly)
2. Other meetings may be held at such times and places as may be determined by the Executive Leadership or ECPS Council.
3. A business meeting will be conducted during the ASPB annual meeting and action taken by participating members during that meeting is final and need not be submitted to the Society as a whole for ratification.
4. The section will facilitate an in-person meetup during the ASPB annual meeting.

ARTICLE V

Officers and Duties

1. The Executive Leadership of this organization shall be the Chair, Vice Chair, Head of External Communications, Head of Internal Communications, Treasurer.
 - a. The Executive Leadership of the Section shall carry on any business of the Section, which may require action between business meetings. These members are considered full members of the Executive Leadership and ECPS Council. In brief, their duties include:
 - i. **Chair**, is responsible for oversight and coordination of the responsibilities of the officers and for management or delegation of all activities within the section. This includes organization of the section activities and events, specifically activities and events jointly coordinated with other ASPB committees, sections, or programs, as well as any external early career organizations. Additionally, the Chair will serve as the ECPS representative to the ASPB Council.
 - ii. **Vice Chair**, is specifically responsible for servicing the membership of the section. This includes but is not limited to formalizing the ECPS platform based on membership and ECPS section input. They will coordinate with the Head of External Communications to ensure transparent dialogue between sectional members and sectional leadership. Additionally, the Vice Chair serves as the ECPS elected representative to the ASPB Membership Committee. If the Chair cannot perform their duties, and is removed (see Article VIII), the Vice Chair will take over the responsibilities of the Chair.

- iii. **Head of External Communications**, is responsible for overseeing the transparent dialogue between sectional membership and sectional leadership. This includes but is not limited to: updating static information on the section's online platform of choice, monitoring/moderating online chatter from sectional members, broadcasting ECPS Section or general ECPS opportunities (webinars, networking, training...etc) to the sectional membership, broadcasting ECPS Section surveys for membership feedback.
 - iv. **Head of Internal Communications**, is responsible for documenting and facilitating internal section communication. This includes but is not limited to: transcribing meeting notes, synthesizing informational updates from the ECPS Council and sending one-sheets ahead of general body meetings, and scheduling general body meetings.
 - v. **Treasurer**, is responsible for coordination of all payments and oversight of the finances of the section. Purchases are subject to the approval of the Executive Leadership. If needed, they will seek out fundraising efforts for activities, presenting them to the Executive Leadership.
 - b. If necessary, any Executive Leadership officer may recruit other officers, ECPS council members, or sectional members to help with tasks.
 - c. More detailed documentation and description of Executive Leadership roles will be provided to that officer during the onboarding process.
2. The ECPS Council of this organization shall be composed of the early career representatives of each ASPB committee, section, and program. All ECPS Council members are considered full members of the ECPS Council.
 - a. The ECPS Council shall be responsible for discussing and prioritizing membership concerns and suggestions to help create an ECPS platform.
 - b. The ECPS Council shall be responsible for advocating and executing the platform set form by the ECPS sectional membership as well as the larger ASPB early career membership, within their respective committees, sections, and programs.
 - c. The ECPS Council members shall be responsible for synthesizing committee, section, and program updates. Information deemed sensitive by the committee, section, or program should not be included in the synopsis. These synopses shall be handed to the Head of Internal Communications two weeks prior to every scheduled ECPS Council meeting. This shall help facilitate a cohesive understanding of where ASPB is heading and how early careers can carve out their own niches and plug into others in service to early career members.
 - d. As of January 16th 2020, involved committees, sections, and programs include: Membership Committee, Education Committee, Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Programming Committee, Publications Committee, Women in Plant Biology Committee, Environmental and Ecological Plant Physiology Section, and the Ambassador Program.
3. Advisory roles are considered full members of the body in which they serve:
 - a. All past Chairs may serve in an advisory role to the current Executive Leadership, with only the immediate past Chair being able to attend Executive Leadership

meetings, if the Executive Leadership deems this appropriate. These positions are appointment, not election based.

- b. The Executive Leadership may elect an ASPB member to the ECPS Council who does not meet the early career definition criteria listed in Article III. This position may be renewed yearly, and is not subject to the election laws outlined in Article VII.
 - c. The Executive Leadership may elect an ASPB staff member to the ECPS Executive Leadership. This advisor does not have to meet the early career definition criteria listed in Article III. This position may be renewed yearly, and is not subject to the election laws outlined in Article VII.
4. Ad hoc Members may be appointed for additional duties as needed by the Executive Leadership or ECPS Council. These members are not considered full members.

ARTICLE VI

Voting

1. Internal Executive Leadership and ECPS Council voting:
 - a. Full members of a governing body have the equivalent of one vote. In the event of a tie, the Chair's vote will count as two votes.
 - b. For all votes, a quorum is reached when 51% of that body is present for a vote. A quorum must be met for any vote to be valid.
 - c. If a quorum is present, full members of a given body may motion for a vote during a general body meetings. Once a vote is motioned, another full member must second the motion for the vote to proceed.
 - d. For voting conducted through email, a quorum can be reached by emailing all full members of a governing body. No motion for a vote is necessary.
 - e. A vote passes with a 50% or greater majority. Abstentions shall not count for or against this percentage. For online votes, a period of one week will be given before that member is considered an abstention.
 - f. There will be no voting by proxy. If a full member wishes to cast their vote early, it may be done by emailing the governing body.
2. External voting by the sectional membership:
 - a. All members receive one vote. These votes will be cast electronically for officer elections and constitution amendments.
 - b. Non-voting (voting abstentions) will not count for or against a voting percentage.

ARTICLE VII

Elections, Term Lengths and Limitations

1. The election process, term lengths, and limitations will adhere to an inaugural rule set to facilitate the start of the Section.
 - a. Under these inaugural rules, nominations and elections of the Executive Leadership positions will be organized by the authors of the ECPS Section Proposal, submitted to the ASPB Council in Oct of 2019. Nominations for officer positions will first be open

to proposal authors. If any positions remain unfilled, additional names may be nominated.

- b. Consent of the nominees for all offices shall be obtained before their names are added to the ballot.
 - c. The Chair, Vice Chair, and Head of Internal Communications positions must be held by current ASPB members.
 - d. Term lengths:
 - i. The Chair, Vice Chair, and Head of Internal Communications shall serve for two years in their respective positions.
 - ii. The Head of External Communications, and Treasurer shall serve for three years in their respective positions.
 - e. Executive Leadership positions under probationary status do not count against overall term limits, with the exception of the Chair and Vice Chair.
2. Election process after the specific rule set:
- a. All ECPS Executive Leadership officers will serve two years in office.
 - b. Upon completion of a two year term, the position of Chair will follow a specific line of succession:
 - i. No leadership position automatically rolls into the Chair position. It requires a vote from the Executive Leadership prior to new ballots going out to the section membership. Eligibility for the Chair position will follow the specific line of succession (see Section 2, paragraph *ii*).
 1. If a Leadership position wants to become Chair, that person is subject to a vote (see Article VI for voting rules). If that person does not pass a vote, eligibility for the Chair position passes to the next in the line of succession
 2. If no leadership position can ascend into the Chair position, that position will be placed on the outgoing ballot for the membership to choose a new Chair in addition to all other positions.
 - ii. The line of succession is as follows: Vice Chair, Head of Internal Communication, Head of External Communication, Treasurer.
 - c. The positions of: Vice Chair, Head of Internal Communications, Head of External Communications, and Treasurer will be elected directly from the sectional membership, with the positions of: Vice Chair and Head of Internal Communications alternating years with the positions of: Head of External Communications and Treasurer.
 - i. Any sectional member can be elected to these Executive Leadership offices unless individual conflicts with Article VII section 3, 4, and 5.
 - d. New officers shall start their term as of Oct. 1 of the year elected.
 - e. The election of officers to the Executive Leadership shall be organized by the Vice Chair as follows:
 - i. The Executive Leadership shall present a slate of nominations for the offices to be vacated. Any member of the ECPS Section may suggest nominations or self-nominate for each office.
 - ii. The consent of the nominees for all offices shall be obtained before their names are placed on the ballot.

- iii. Within one month after the ASPB annual meeting, the Vice Chair shall send to the ECPS Section members the electronic election ballots. These shall contain the names of the candidates who have been nominated and agreed to serve if elected. Candidates will write a small paragraph about their platform and qualifications for the position. Candidate names will be placed on the ballot in alphabetical order by first name. Balloting shall be completed prior to September 1.
 - iv. If only one candidate for an office has been nominated as outlined above in this subsection (paragraph *i*) the Vice Chair shall declare the candidate elected to that office.
 - v. If more than two candidates are nominated to a position, a candidate must win by a 50% or greater majority, otherwise a run-off election between the two leading candidates will be held.
 - vi. Election will be held electronically, with results posted publicly to the sectional membership.
 - f. Election of, years in office, and term limitations for full members of the ECPS Council, except Advisory Roles (see Article V, Section 3), are outside the purview of the ECPS Section.
3. No individual shall serve for more than one term in any one office.
 4. No individual shall hold more than one office position at a time.
 5. Any individuals who are 9 years post-degree are not eligible for multi-year Executive Leadership offices.

ARTICLE VIII

Officer and Sectional Member Removal

1. A call of no confidence in a full member of the Executive Leadership can occur two ways:
 - a. A motion of no confidence against a particular officer is signed by at least 10% of the current sectional membership is brought to the Executive Leadership. Electronic signatures are acceptable.
 - b. A 50% or greater majority of Executive Leadership officers call for no confidence in another officer.
2. The Executive Leadership will inform the officer in question, hear arguments in defense, and hold an anonymous vote without that officer present. If a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of officers vote to remove the officer, they will be removed from office immediately.
3. No appeals process will be available.
4. Any officer positions that become available will be subject to an immediate call for nominations from the sectional membership to complete the remainder of that officer's term. Exceptions are vacancies in the Chair position, which will be filled by the Vice Chair, and the Vice Chair position, which will be filled by the Head of Internal Communications.
5. A sectional member can be removed from the ECPS Section if they break with ASPB's code of conduct policies, or the ECPS Sections non-discrimination policies outlined in Article XI.

The Executive Leadership will inform the member in question, hear arguments in defense, and hold an anonymous vote among Executive Leadership. If a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of officers vote to remove the member, the member will be removed immediately, no refund of membership dues will be issued, nor will that member be allowed to rejoin at a future date. No appeals will be available.

6. If an officer wants to voluntarily leave a position, they may do so with the consent of the remaining Executive Leadership. If an officer is appointed as an ASPB Committee Chair, or elected as ASPB President-, or Secretary-Elect, that officer must step down from their position on the ECPS Section Executive Leadership.

ARTICLE IX.

Representation in Other Organizations

1. The Chair of the ECPS Section will represent the section on the ASPB Council and ASPB Membership Committee during the course of their term. The Chair must also be a member of the Society and will be limited to a single term in that office.
2. The Vice Chair of the ECPS Section will fill in for the Chair in meetings the Chair cannot attend.

ARTICLE X.

Amendments

Any member of the section may propose amendments to the constitution, submit them in writing (electronic submissions are acceptable) to the Head of External Communications. Proposed amendments will be discussed by the ECPS Council twice a year. Any amendments receiving a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority will be put to a vote by the sectional membership. A $\frac{2}{3}$ vote by the sectional membership is needed to amend the constitution.

ARTICLE XI.

Non-Discrimination

Membership and all privileges, including voting and officer positions, must be extended to all early career plant scientists without regard to race, color, sex, (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or national origin, geographical location, religion, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. This is in accordance with the non-discrimination and anti-harrassment policies of ASPB.

ARTICLE XII.

Other Matters

Section traditions regarding student stipends, awards, and similar expenditures will be decided at the Annual Business Meeting by the membership at large or, if necessary, by the Executive Committee if action is required before the next business meeting. Once established, section traditions and policies will remain in place until explicitly altered at the Annual Business Meeting.

ARTICLE XIII
Awards

1. The ECPS Leadership has the ability to create or remove awards for sectional members. This process is based on a vote.

Constitution Committee of the ASPB-ECPS Vice Section, as of January 2020:

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