

Program Committee

ECR Rep: Cody Bekkering (UC Davis)

1) In the broadest sense, what are the responsibilities of your committee?

The responsibility of the program committee is to **decide on the arrangement and content of ASPB's annual meeting (PlantBio)**. This includes content for plenaries, concurrent sections, workshops, poster sessions, and networking events. Many of these sessions are decided from community input; the program committee makes decisions on submitted abstracts in each of those categories. **Changes to annual meetings are also discussed by the program committee.** This includes transitions to a full hybrid, expansion of the conference footprint, new approaches to networking, community engagement events, and efforts to increase inclusion within the annual meeting. The program committee focuses mainly on content while the logistics are managed by an outside contractor.

2) How many hours per month of commitment does it take?

The time commitment for the program committee is variable. Most of the time commitment is centered around **two meetings every year** where the committee gathers in person on-site (usually at a venue being considered for a conference). These meetings occur in the **early fall (mid-Sept-Oct) and in early spring (April) and are three days each**. You have the option of joining the meetings virtually. The fall meeting entails discussing major changes and improvements for the upcoming and following PlantBio. During the spring meeting, we evaluate the abstracts to be considered for talks in concurrent sessions. Prior to the spring meeting, you are expected to evaluate the abstracts assigned to you. Depending on your experience, this would be less than one day's work. Outside of these specified meetings, you are welcome to engage on behalf of the program committee. For instance, Jithesh and Laura organized a workshop on preparing abstracts for conferences in February 2022. I organized the "icebreaker lounge" during PlantBio2022.

3) How can ECR reps influence the functioning of the committee? (You are welcome to provide examples)

ECR representatives act as full-fledged members of the committee. They **contribute to high-level discussions about meeting content** in the twice-yearly meetings. Specifically, ECR reps **help decide on the content and arrangements of concurrent sessions, workshops, plenaries, networking, and posters**. These sessions are decided both from discussions within the committee and from community input through abstracts. Suggestions from other ASPB committees are also incorporated as much as possible.

ECR reps can influence the function of the committee through various sub-committees and individual assignments. In my specific case, I serve as a part of a group to brainstorm ways to engage undergraduates and a group to start planning ahead for PlantBio24. As an individual member of the committee, I have also overseen specific networking events during Plant Bio 22 and have also been delegated to do some research on grant awarding organizations that could support scholars at future ASPB meetings.

4) Do the ECR reps have an equal “say” in matters/ decisions?

ECR reps on the program committee have quite a bit of say generally. The program committee absolutely incorporates ECR input. Tasks are also delegated for ECR reps to be the lead. There are several “sub-committees” within the program committee that make decisions also, which the ECR rep can be a part of.

5) What have you learned by serving on this committee?

I have **learned professional skills including event planning, communication, logistics, and community building**. I have also learned about the many (often competing) interests that shape the Plant Biology annual meetings. Finally, I have built a growing—yet still incomplete—**consciousness for building inclusion within a large community of scholars**.

6) Additional notes-

ASPB bears the cost of your trip for the fall and spring meetings. Your registration for the conference is waived off and 2 days of stay during the conference are paid for by ASPB.

The program committee is a unique opportunity to contribute to a high-visibility component of ASPB. Members of the community look to the annual meeting as an indicator of ASPB’s values and will rightfully hold ASPB accountable for its programming and representation. Unique to the program committee, the products of this committee will receive substantial public attention. This makes involvement on the program committee incredibly rewarding.