



Is Involvement Inviting?

Dear Labby,

I joined ASCB as a student and am now a postdoc member. The 2010 ASCB Annual Meeting in Philadelphia (my fourth) was great in terms of science and networking, but for the first time I also got to wondering how I might get more involved. I want to be with ASCB for the long term and yet I don't see any obvious ways to get involved. I'm not saying it looks like an exclusive club, but I am wondering how someone at my stage can get an opportunity to be not only a member, but an active player in ASCB.

—Hopeful

Dear Hopeful,

Your instinct is wonderful to see. And you will be pleased to know that over the past few years the leadership of ASCB has had many strategic discussions about how it might do a better job of engaging students and postdocs not only as members, but to play significant roles in achieving the mission and shaping the direction of the Society. Your perception that the portals are not evident is telling and is thus a very constructive point.

One axis is a role in mobilizing new members. ASCB has established an "Ambassador" role for members (at any career stage) who are willing to share information with others and serve as a resource for prospective and current members. A key role ASCB Ambassadors play is to convey how important ASCB membership has been for them, citing specific vignettes.

Another front you might consider is to get involved in the ASCB's Subcommittee on Postdoctoral Training (SCOPT). SCOPT is a subcommittee of the Education Committee. It meets at the ASCB Annual Meeting and sponsors a career-focused session there as well. For more information, contact Thea Clarke, Editorial and Education Senior Manager, at tclarke@ascb.org. In addition, you might want to volunteer to serve on ASCB committees. To learn more about what the ASCB committees do, click on each one listed under Committees on the ASCB home page at www.ascb.org. A member's initiative is always welcome, reflecting a willingness to serve. You can then write to ascbinfo@ascb.org to express your interest in specific committees. Openings are typically discussed by committee members starting in the summer. Committee chairs present new members to the ASCB Executive Committee for approval in the fall/winter. If you at first don't succeed in joining a committee, don't lose heart. Committee chairs work hard to balance their committees in all sorts of ways—by scientific specialty, institution, geography, gender, race and ethnicity, career stage, etc.

Another suggestion is to plan a scientific session for the ASCB Annual Meeting in your area of interest and submit a Special Interest Subgroup application. Note that the deadline is fast approaching: July 21, 2011. This opportunity is available only to ASCB members. For more information, visit www.ascb.org/meetings/subgroup/subgroup.cfm. In addition, the ASCB does advertise special opportunities to serve throughout the year. Coming up is the annual request by the Public Information Committee for affiliates to help screen abstracts for inclusion in the ASCB's media outreach publication—the ASCB press book. The ASCB Women in Cell Biology Committee has a Network that shares information and support (and it's not limited to women). To join, visit www.ascb.org/wicbnetwork.html. The Network meets in person at the ASCB Annual Meeting at a reception.

If you're interested in public policy, you might want to advocate for research funding and basic science on a Hill Day. The ASCB is a founding member of the Coalition for the Life Sciences (CLS), which offers grants to assist scientists at all levels in coming to Capitol Hill, in Washington, DC, for a day of advocacy. For information, visit www.coalitionforlifesciences.org. ASCB also offers information about how to reach out to your elected officials. Sign up for the CLS's Congressional Liaison Committee at www.ascb.org/clsadvocate.html to get alerts and join the effort.

ASCB knows that many members join in order to present their science at the ASCB Annual Meeting, but they often stay members because the ASCB is their scientific home, their community. You'll find more networking opportunities this year in Denver—including not only facilitated science discussion tables on multiple topics but also new networking sessions organized by poster topic.

DEAR Labby

I hope I haven't overwhelmed you with options. ASCB remains interested in your ideas as well. So write to president@ascb.org, and I'm sure that ASCB President Sandra Schmid and Executive Director Joan Goldberg will welcome your thoughts and will be grateful for your interest in getting more involved. Engaged members are at the heart of the ASCB. Your inquiry could not be more timely. Labby encourages you to follow through, and to encourage ASCB student and postdoc members you know to do the same. You are all the future of ASCB. ■

—Labby

Direct your questions to labby@ascb.org. Authors of questions chosen for publication may indicate whether or not they wish to be identified. Submissions may be edited for space and style.

Got Questions?

Labby has answers. ASCB's popular columnist will select career-related questions for publication and thoughtful response in the *ASCB Newsletter*. Confidentiality guaranteed if requested. Write us at labby@ascb.org. ■

Did You Know...?

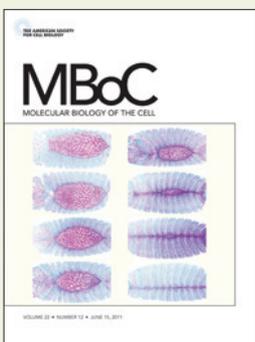
July 28 is the regular abstract submission deadline (for Minisymposium or poster presentation) for the 2011 ASCB Annual Meeting; the meeting will be held December 3–7 in Denver, CO, USA.

- Sponsorship of abstracts is required.
- All current members and member applicants may sponsor their own abstract.
- All regular, postdoctoral, and emeritus members may sponsor another person's abstract if they are not submitting one themselves.
- The ASCB is *the* place to present your research, get expert feedback, meet collaborators, learn new techniques, discuss your work, and be inspired.

Are there nonmembers in your lab who want to submit abstracts?

Now is the time to encourage them to join ASCB. Not only will they be able to sponsor their own abstract, but they will be eligible for the discounted member-only registration rate. For more information, go to www.ascb.org and click on "Membership." ■

MBoC Seeks Features Articles



Got something to say? *Molecular Biology of the Cell (MBoC)*, the basic research journal of the ASCB, is now publishing Features articles that highlight a broad range of issues of interest to the cell biology community. Recent and upcoming Features articles discuss innovation, the role of National Institutes of Health Program Directors, and how key discoveries were made. Other articles have provided pragmatic guides to specific techniques or have synthesized information to highlight recent advances and important unanswered questions. Do you have a perspective that may be of broad interest to the cell biology community? If so, *MBoC* welcomes your proposal for a Features article. Please send your proposal to mbc@ascb.org. ■

