



Search for Executive Director

Bethesda, Maryland

Executive Summary

The Council of the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) welcomes applications and nominations for its next Executive Director. Founded in 1960, ASCB is the primary voice for the domestic and international cell biology community. The ASCB is dedicated to advancing scientific discovery, shaping public research policies, improving education and training, promoting professional development, and increasing diversity in the scientific workforce. The Society currently has about 9,000 members in the United States and in more than 62 countries around the world.

ASCB is undertaking the search for an Executive Director at a time of opportunities. The ASCB has recently undertaken exciting new endeavors and has affirmed its position among peer societies. ASCB's membership dynamics are positive, the Society is financially sound, and its professional staff is talented and committed. This is the moment for the next Executive Director to shape the strategies that will enhance the Society's service to its members and more broadly engage the burgeoning field of life sciences and biomedical research.

The successful candidate for this influential position will possess skills to lead a complex organization and a strong commitment to scientific research. S/he will be business minded, committed to developing a strategic vision for the Society, and able to advance innovative revenue models that support ASCB's core mission. As the most visible public representative of the Society, the candidate will possess the ability to enthusiastically and persuasively advocate for ASCB among the scientific community, policy makers, industry groups, and funding organizations.

Isaacson, Miller is assisting the Society in this important recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

American Society for Cell Biology

The American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) is a nonprofit membership organization of biologists studying the cell, the fundamental unit of life. The spectrum of scientific fields represented by ASCB is broad, ranging from basic cell biology to applied and clinical sciences.

ASCB's current members come from universities, colleges, professional schools, government, industry, and public and private research institutions. Twenty five percent of ASCB members are from outside the United States.

Membership in ASCB is open and evolving given the rapid changes and innovations in biomedical research. The Society welcomes all research scientists, students, and educators who have education or research experience in cell biology or an allied field.

ASCB champions excellence in cell biology from K–12 science education through professional careers. It highlights news of interest to basic scientists, identifies grant and award opportunities for members, and offers a number of publications, including *Molecular Biology of the Cell*, a twice-monthly, online scholarly journal publishing reports of original research on advances in the scientific understanding of the molecular basis of the cell, and *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, a free, online quarterly journal highlighting peer-reviewed articles on life science education at the K–12, undergraduate, and graduate levels.

In addition to the Annual Meeting, which typically draws over 6,000 attendees, the Society provides career resources for all members and seeks to significantly support both women and minority cell biologists at all stages of their education and careers. The ASCB also recognizes worthy scientists at various levels with a variety of prestigious awards. For example, since 2013, in collaboration with Beckman Coulter Life Sciences, ASCB has awarded the Kaluza Prize to honor academic excellence in graduate student research. In 2015 ASCB also gave out the first ASCB-Gibco Emerging Leader Prize to honor not-yet-tenured independent investigators with outstanding scientific accomplishments and strong publication track records.

As an important voice for the cell biology community, the ASCB regularly educates Congress and the Administration about the importance of basic biomedical funding and policy. Currently, ASCB is a member of the Coalition for the Life Sciences (CLS). CLS is an alliance of professional organizations working together to foster public policies that advance basic biological research and its applications in medicine and other fields. In addition, the Society promotes awareness among the lay public and the media about the latest advances in cell biology and the crucial importance of basic research for human health.

For more information, please visit www.ascb.org.

Governance

The property, business, and affairs of ASCB are governed by its elected, volunteer Council. The duties of the Council are to engage in the overall stewardship of the Society, to determine the policies of the Society, approve the budget, designate the terms for signatory authority for checks and agreements, and take other appropriate governance actions.

The Council consists of the five individuals elected as Officers and includes the President, President-Elect, Past President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These officials constitute the Executive Committee. The remainder of the Council is made up of twelve individuals elected as

Councilors. Councilors are chosen by the membership of the Society for three-year terms, with four elected each year.

ASCB's organizational structure has volunteers rotating regularly, with Presidents serving one-year terms. Consequently, the Executive Director provides essential continuity in developing and implementing long-term strategies. Her/his success depends on the ability to present compelling options to the Council, facilitate this group's decision making, and implement with minimal oversight. The Council and Executive Director have struck the right balance in this partnership in the past and it is an effective *modus operandi* the Council aspires to continue.

The current President is Peter Walter, PhD. Walter is a professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at the University of California, San Francisco as well as a principal investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. President-Elect Pietro De Camilli, MD, will succeed him. He is Professor of Neuroscience and Cell Biology at Yale University and also an investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. The Past President is Shirley Tilghman, President Emerita and Professor of Molecular Biology at Princeton University.

The Executive Director

The Executive Director reports to the President, who leads the five-person Executive Committee. S/he also serves as an *ex-officio* member of that committee. The Executive Director reports through the Executive Committee to the Council. While working in close alignment with the Council, s/he is expected to lead autonomously and have the ability to successfully oversee multi-year strategies. The Society currently has 22 full-time staff the majority of whom are based in Bethesda. The Executive Director's direct reports include the Senior Director of Finance and Administration; directors of Business Development, Communication and Education, Meetings, Publications, and Public Policy; the Chief Technology Officer; and the Executive Director's Assistant. The operating budget of \$7 million is made up of three primary revenue sources: membership, meetings, and publications. The Society currently has reserves at a value of approximately \$8 million.

Leadership Opportunities & Challenges

Given the rapid advances in biological research, the changing funding landscape, and generational shifts among scientific researchers, the next Executive Director will assume leadership of ASCB during a critical, exciting juncture. Success for the Executive Director will be measured by how well s/he meets the following opportunities and challenges:

Provide the vision to ensure the Society's vitality

In partnership with the Council, the Executive Director will shape and guide a vision to maximize the Society's impact. To this end s/he will bring an appreciation of the culture of scientific discovery, as well as experience leading strategically by setting the long-term agenda, aligning parties, and executing.

Central to the strategy will be a coherent approach to expanding the influence of ASCB, which will include development of strategic alliances with fields that originated but diversified from cell biology as well as fields that are newly reliant on/engaging with cell biology. The Executive Director must have the judgment and foresight to meaningfully capture the expanding—and increasingly interdisciplinary—communities under the cell biology umbrella and help others appreciate the unifying value gained through ASCB.

Serve the membership and engage the next generation

The Executive Director must explicitly connect the value of ASCB to the careers of cell biologists, both in academia and private industry. Particular attention needs to be paid to early career scientists and those from under-represented backgrounds. This is not the time to maintain the status quo. The Executive Director must listen, experiment, and innovate to ensure that the Annual Meeting, educational programs, and publications are “must haves.” Moreover, as a community broader than any one lab or organization, the Society offers unmatched power as an organizing force. Immense value lies in connecting scientists within ASCB and within other entities and fields in ways that allow members to keep pace of rapid changes in the biological sciences.

Sustain the mission of the Society with strong business acumen

The business models undergirding scientific societies face intense pressure. Growth in membership, publications, and meetings are no longer assured as science becomes more specialized, publications proliferate, and funding constricts. More broadly, science is adapting to consistent declines in research investment. The next Executive Director will find new sources of revenue to ensure the financial health and longevity of the Society. Concurrently, the Executive Director will bring rigor both in assessing opportunities to invest resources and in controlling costs. Excellent business management and resource stewardship are at the core of enabling ASCB’s mission.

Build bridges internally and externally

As chief external ambassador for the Society, the Executive Director must engage, persuade, and inspire. S/he must actively connect not just within the community of cell biologists, but also with funders, policy makers, leaders in private industry, academia, and the broader scientific community in underscoring the ASCB’s value and the essential nature of cell biology.

Lead and inspire a talented, committed team

An efficient, effective, and committed staff anchors ASCB’s work. The right people are in the right roles and they work at a high level; this is not a staff rebuilding job for the Executive Director. Instead, s/he has the opportunity to further develop the team. With a transparent, inclusive, and consultative approach, the Executive Director can maximize the staff’s capability to build their units, contribute to long-term planning, and groom emerging talent.

Qualifications & Experience

The following qualifications represent the broad set of skills and personal attributes deemed important for success as the next Executive Director. While no candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal assets:

- Significant leadership, management, and decision-making experience with direct accountability for results at an organization of comparable size and/or complexity.
- Demonstrated entrepreneurial skills including a highly creative approach to strategic innovation.
- Previous experience in biomedical research; specific knowledge of cell biology is a plus but not required.
- Experience working collaboratively and effectively with highly accomplished and engaged volunteers in a professional membership organization.
- A successful track record of building, motivating, and mentoring high-performing teams.
- Proven experience growing membership and non-dues programs to further enhance the membership value proposition.
- Understanding of grants and the importance of the scientific funding world.
- Experience serving as an industry or organization spokesperson in order to take on a strong representational role with the media, other science organizations, government officials, funders, and leaders from private industry.
- Informed understanding of and passion for science and research policy and the people who impact it.
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills and listening ability.
- Strong executive presence.
- Excellent judgment.
- Customer service orientation and ability to adapt quickly.
- Interest in making a long-term commitment to the organization.
- An advanced degree in a relevant (scientific) field is preferred but not required.

Application Procedure

Review of nominations and applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications (including CVs, resumes, and letters of interest responding to the position challenges outlined above) should be sent electronically and in confidence to:

Philip Jaeger, Vice President
Kahn Lee, Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller

1300 19th Street N.W., Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

Apply at the website: www.imsearch.com/5646

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged

The American Society for Cell Biology is proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE)

