Public Information Committee Charter

TYPE OF COMMITTEE: Standing

PURPOSE:

The goal of the Public Information Committee (PIC) is to encourage and empower cell biologists to engage in outreach activities that communicate the value, excitement, beauty and importance of science to a variety of audiences, especially those not comprised of other scientists. The committee’s activities will provide opportunities for cell biologists to engage in science outreach and also help scientists enhance their ability to communicate complex scientific ideas and inform others about the research activities they carry out. Collectively, our work promotes the importance and value of scientific research, inspires the next generation of young scientists, and cultivates a more scientifically educated population.

The committee uses the following strategies to achieve this vision:

- Communicating information and strategies that serve as blueprints for effective outreach activities. We accomplish this by assembling freely available “toolkits” that can be used in the design of outreach activities and events and by publishing testimonials (e.g., in the form of blogs) of ASCB members that participate in outreach.
- Provide training mechanisms to hone the communication skills of cell biologists.
- Humanize the pursuit of scientific knowledge through efforts to link science to the arts, society and contemporary medicine.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

- Ideal Size: 2 co-chairs, 12 full members, 4 associate members, 2 ex officio, liaisons as needed
- Term Length: 1 year for associates with potential to be invited for subsequent 3-year full membership with the opportunity to renew once. Co-chairs have 3-year terms with the opportunity to renew once.
- Average Time Commitment: ~20 hours/year
- Membership Type(s): Any ASCB membership category except Undergraduate. The committee strives for diversity of its members in terms of their institutional affiliation, geographic location, professional position and responsibilities, and personal characteristics, and aims for a mix of regular, postdoc, and student ASCB members.
- Approval Process: Co-chairs are approved by Council. Full members are approved by the Executive Committee. Associates are invited by the co-chairs.
- Member Expertise: Committee members are expected to be passionate about scientific outreach, and be committed to contributing to Committee activities.
- Committee efforts are typically divided between 5-7 working groups, the identity and number of which depending upon the planned activities. Each committee member will work in at least one working group. Current working groups include organizing professional development sessions at
the ASCB|EMBO Annual Meeting; reviewing submitted abstracts for newsworthy content; planning webinars on communication/outreach topics; updating communication toolkits on the ASCB website; providing blogs on communication and outreach activities; and organizing the annual image and video contest.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DELIVERABLES:

- Manage and review toolkits focused on outreach and education.
- Publish blogs focused on scientific outreach (~3-4 times per year).
- Organize ~2-3 webinars per year focused on outreach and contemporary issues that benefit from connecting the public to scientists.
- Review newsworthy abstracts submitted for presentation at the Annual ASCB|EMBO meeting.
- Hold Image Contest once per year, culminating with awards at the Annual ASCB|EMBO meeting.
- Hold Elevator Speech Contest once per year, in conjunction with the Advocacy Toolbox professional development session at the Annual ASCB|EMBO meeting.
- Continue to brainstorm and evaluate potential activities, ensuring that new activities support our vision. Review and adjust committee activities on a yearly basis.

MEETINGS:

Members participate in conference calls 3-4 times throughout the year and one meeting held during the ASCB|EMBO Meeting. Subcommittees conduct business through emails and conference calls as needed.