

Plant Biology
(Interdepartmental Graduate Major)
Governance Document
Effective October 10, 2008

1. MISSION STATEMENT

The Interdepartmental Plant Biology Major (IPB) educates scientists in basic plant biology, including but not limited to plant molecular biology, plant cell biology, plant physiology, and plant organismal biology and provides training in state-of-the-art methods and technologies. The Major provides interdisciplinary interactions through seminars, journal clubs, informal discussions and multi-user equipment. Formal coursework for the major is provided from several different disciplines with the flexibility to be relevant to students with a range of interests covering studies of plants at all levels of organization. Research emphasis is on basic science. The Major serves to attract external funding through interdisciplinary activities and projects. Interaction with industry is promoted by developing subject matter on which to base the development of new economically useful technologies.

2. FACULTY MEMBERSHIP

The IPB faculty has overall responsibility for the quality and well-being of the interdepartmental graduate major. To be awarded a graduate degree in Plant Biology, a student's major professor must be a formally elected member of IPB. New IPB faculty are admitted to the major after a review of their research achievements, their experience in education of graduate students, and their research interests in the area of plant biology. Faculty membership terms start on the day of the Chair announcement following an IPB faculty vote of approval. The term of membership is 5 years and renewable upon review. The end of the term is June 30 of the fifth year from the appointment date. Faculty may resign from the IPB program upon written request and approval by the Chair.

2.1. Eligibility

Faculty members at Iowa State University who are actively involved in plant biology research and graduate training may apply for membership in IPB. Plant biologists outside the ISU campus who hold a PhD degree and have demonstrated a consistently high level of research in fundamental plant biology are also eligible to apply for IPB membership.

Only those faculty demonstrating active research and graduate training in the area of plant biology are admitted to the major or invited to continue. Active faculty members are those 1) who have served as a chair or member of a Program Of Study (POS) committee for an IPB student in the past 5 years, or 2) who are serving as a member of one of the faculty standing committees of the program.

All applications for new or renewed membership are first evaluated by the IPB Faculty Credentials Committee, a standing committee of three IPB faculty, which makes a recommendation to the Chair. The Chair will then forward the application to the entire IPB faculty who vote to accept or decline the application. The results of vote will be announced by the Chair.

2.2. New Membership Application

An application for **New Faculty** membership must include:

- 1) A complete curriculum vitae consisting of
 - a) Education
 - b) Work experiences
 - c) A publication record for entire professional career that shows research activity in plant biology
- 2) A cover letter consisting of

- a) Overall research activities and activities specifically related to the field of plant biology
- b) A willingness to provide either independent or departmental financial support for graduate students should the need arise
- c) A record of training graduate students, if applicable.
- d) A stated commitment to participate actively in the functions of the Major.

2.3. Renewal of Membership

Membership must be renewed every five years. In the spring semester of their fifth year, any faculty whose membership in IPB will expire during the upcoming summer will be notified by the IPB Chair or Program Coordinator and invited to submit an application for Renewal Membership.

An application for **Renewal Membership** must include the following:

- 1) Curriculum vitae and publication list for last 5 years.
- 2) Statement of research activities in the past 5 years and their relation to the field of plant biology.
- 3) Record of IPB graduate students advised in the past 5 years.
- 4) Evidence of participation in the IPB in the past 5 years. For example, committee service, organization of symposia or retreat, attendance at activities, recruiting efforts.

3. ADMINISTRATION

The IPB is an interdepartmental major coordinating graduate education and research in the areas of plant biochemistry, plant molecular biology, plant cell biology, plant physiology and and plant organismal biology. Graduate study in IPB, leading to the Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy Degrees, is currently offered through seven participating departments, Agronomy, Biochemistry Biophysics & Molecular Biology (BBMB), Chemical & Biological Engineering (CBE), Ecology Evolution & Organismal Biology (EEOB), Genetics, Development & Cellular Biology (GDCB), Horticulture, and Plant Pathology. These departments are administered through three colleges; the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the College of Engineering, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. IPB Faculty participate in the administration of the major through service on committees and by vote on major issues.

3.1. Selection and Appointment of A Chair and An Associate Chair

The Interdepartmental Plant Biology Major is the responsibility of IPB faculty and is administered by the Graduate College. The Chair of IPB is the designated “Director of Graduate Education (DOGE)” of the major. The Chair and Associate Chair are nominated and elected by its faculty from the membership, and confirmed by the Dean of the Graduate College.

3.1.1. Chair and Associate Chair Responsibilities

The Chair is responsible for the day to day supervision of the major and for monitoring student progress. In addition to general leadership and program coordination, the Chair’s responsibilities are to:

1. Serve as course instructor or coordinator for IPB research seminar PLBIO 696 (fall and spring)
2. Interact with students
3. Serve as temporary major professor for rotation students (if not specified)
4. Supervise the IPB student organization and attend student officer meetings
5. Appoint faculty committees
6. Carry out existing program policies and suggest new policies
7. Administer the budget
8. Raise funds for annual Loomis Lecture and other academic events
9. Serve as a liaison with the ISU administration
10. Sign administrative documents on behalf of the major

11. Call and organize faculty meetings and retreats
12. Supervise office staff

The Chair serves a three-year term and is eligible for re-election any number of times.

The IPB Associate Chair (AC) shares the administrative duties, as assigned by the Chair. The AC shall assume any or all above listed responsibilities for the Major when the Chair is unable to execute the duties. The AC will succeed the current Chair at the end of the three-year term of the Chair. The AC serves a three-year term and is eligible for re-election any number of times.

3.1.2. Chair and Associate Chair Eligibility

The candidates nominated for the positions of Chair and Associate Chair must have the following qualifications:

1. membership in IPB
2. ongoing research program in Plant Biology
3. academic tenure
4. not currently serving as a Department Chair
5. ability/willingness to work with IPB faculty and students, the Graduate College, and the College administration.
6. demonstrated enthusiasm for the major

3.1.3. Procedures for Chair and Associate Chair Selection

The IPB Supervisory Committee (see Section 3.2) considers all active IPB faculty members as possible candidates in the Spring term prior to the end of the current Chair's term. After due consideration of all potential candidates, the Committee presents to the faculty no more than three nominees for AC. Voting shall be sent electronically to each faculty member's e-mail address. Ballots must be returned to the Program Coordinator within two weeks to be counted. This election shall be held no later than May 1 prior to the end of the current Chair's term of office. The faculty candidate receiving the most votes shall be declared the incoming Associate Chair. If two candidates receive the most and equal number of votes, a second electronic ballot shall be held immediately, as described above between these two candidates. The candidate receiving the most votes in the run-off election shall be declared the incoming Associate Chair. The name of new AC shall be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate College for approval.

If the elected AC is unable to succeed the Chair after the three-year term as the AC, he/she shall notify the IPB Supervisory Committee no later than March 15 prior to the end of the current Chair's term. A similar mid-term election of a new AC shall be conducted as described above to fill this position.

The new Chair assumes his/her responsibilities on July 1.

3.2. IPB Supervisory Committee

The IPB Supervisory Committee is responsible for review of all aspects of the program, for guiding the establishment of policy, for interpreting and implementing established policies, and for advising the Chair. The IPB Supervisory Committee is composed of 5 or 6 faculty members, including the current Program Chair, the current Associate Chair (AC), the past Program Chair (ex officio) and the Chairpersons of each of the IPB faculty standing committees (Section 3.3). The Chair and AC are elected by the members (Section 3.1.3). The other members of the Supervisory Committee are appointed by the Chair. The Program Chair serves as the Chair of the Supervisory Committee. Supervisory Committee members serve three-year terms, and are eligible for re-appointment any number of times.

Each member of the Supervisory Committee including the Chair have one vote in all decisions. In case of disagreements between the Supervisory Committee and the Chair, the Supervisory Committee will have final authority. In the case of disagreement between the Supervisory Committee and the faculty, the faculty view, as determined by a referendum, shall prevail.

3.3. IPB Faculty Standing Committees

Four faculty standing committees are established to carry out tasks and advise the Chair on

- 1) Student Recruitment and Admission
 - a. review student applications
 - b. interview prospective applicants
 - c. make admission recommendations
 - d. write scholarship application support letters on behalf of selection candidates
 - e. attract students to the Major by actively recruiting through various opportunities
- 2) Curriculum
 - a. design curriculum for both PhD and MS degree students of the Major
 - b. periodically review the core curriculum for improvement
 - c. make recommendations to the faculty for revision of the curriculum
- 3) Faculty Credentials
 - a. review IPB faculty credentials
 - b. recruit new faculty members for the Major
 - c. remind faculty for membership renewal
 - d. make recommendations for admitting new members and renewal of memberships
- 4) Program Activity
 - a. organize annual Loomis Lecture and IPB mini-symposium
 - b. organize annual IPB faculty/student fall retreat
- 5) From time to time, other committees may be established on an ad hoc basis at the discretion of the PB chair to address specific needs by the IPB.

The members for each committee are appointed by the Program Chair. The Chairperson of each standing committee are members of the IPB Supervisory Committee. The number, membership, and the responsibilities of the standing committees may be modified at any time at the discretion of the Program Chair. In cases of disagreement between a standing committee and the Program Chair, the Chair shall have final authority.

3.4. Meetings

3.4.1. Faculty Meetings

Full faculty meetings shall be held twice per year (one in fall semester and one in spring semester) to update faculty on state of the Major and discuss issues of importance to the group. It is the responsibility of the Chair to call the meeting. If the Chair is not available, the meetings may be called by the AC.

3.4.2. Supervisory Committee Meetings

To ensure good communication between the Chair and the Supervisory Committee, the Supervisory Committee shall meet bi-monthly, preferably at a regularly scheduled time. It is the responsibility of the Chair to call the meetings. If the Chair is not available, the meetings may be called by the AC.

3.4.3. Standing Committee Meetings

Standing committee members meet when specific issues concerning the Committee responsibility arise. The standing committee meetings are called by the Chairperson of each standing committee. The outcomes of the standing committee meetings shall be reported to the Supervisory Committee by the Chairperson.

3.5. Election and Referenda

Except as noted below in the sections on “Establishment of Policies” and “Changes in the Governance Document”, all elections and referenda shall be determined by a simple majority vote of the

IPB faculty membership who respond to the call for votes. At least 50% of the membership must vote for results of an election or referendum to be binding.

3.6. Ethics Statement

IPB subscribes to the precept that honest and ethical behavior is necessary for the conduct of good science. Membership in IPB (both student and faculty) is contingent upon high individual ethical standards.

3.7. Establishment of Policies

All policies modifying core-course requirements and major changes in IPB core-course content must be approved by a majority of the IPB membership.

All other policies may be established by a vote of the Supervisory Committee. However, the Supervisory Committee shall consult with the faculty when making significant policy decisions and shall hold referenda for policy changes likely to be controversial. In addition, all policy decisions by the Supervisory Committee must be announced to the faculty. If three or more faculty object to a change in policy, a referendum must be held to determine if the change will be accepted or rejected. Referenda on such policies will be determined by a simple majority vote of the IPB membership who respond to the call for votes. At least 50% of the membership must vote for a referendum to be valid.

3.8. Amending this Document

Amendment of this document requires a simple majority of the entire IPB faculty membership.