



RON XAVIER

CANDIDATE STATEMENT

A scientist turned diplomat. ASM has been integral to my career development from bench scientist to diplomatic science counsellor.

As a contributor of science policy and facilitator of science collaboration, I am attuned to the diverse needs of the scientific communities, and the society's perception and expectation of scientists. I am passionate about bringing perspectives and cultures together to work toward common goals.

A supporter of ASM's inclusivity, diversity with equity, access and accountability (IDEAA) initiatives; I bring to the ASM Secretary role the knowledge of ASM's mission and operation, an understanding of ASM's bylaws and procedures, and experience working as part of the ASM Board.

I am grateful for being able to give back to the community that has given me so much. I look forward to more opportunities to support ASM and its members advance and promote the microbial sciences in the post-COVID era in an inclusive way.

ASM-RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Governance Committee, Member, 2019-2025
- Nominating Committee, Member, 2019-2021
- ASM Board of Directors, At-large Member, 2018-2024

RON XAVIER, PHD

Summary

A scientist turned diplomat. ASM played a pivotal role in my career path. Through my service on the ASM Board of Directors (BOD), I maintain close connections with the international scientific community, and stay attuned to major scientific developments and global challenges. I enjoyed working with ASM BOD colleagues on innovative ideas to guide ASM through challenges and create opportunities to fulfil its mission.

In my professional role, for the last seven years, my work has centred around China's trade and agricultural policies, the bilateral relationship and the advancement of New Zealand's interests. I am passionate about bringing perspectives and cultures together to work toward common goals.

Relevant Work Experiences

- 2022 - present Science & Technology Counsellor
New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Beijing
- Facilitate understanding of the research, science and innovation sectors in New Zealand and China
 - Facilitate bilateral technical exchanges and scientific cooperation
 - Advice NZ research, science and innovation organisations on associated risks, e.g. scientific integrity and protection of intellectual properties
 - Report on key science and innovation policies and advancements in China
 - Provide advice on joint funding programmes
 - Organise ministerial and ambassadorial level meetings
 - Identify and progress potential areas of further cooperation, including bilateral funding agreements targeting areas of mutual interest
- 2018 - 2022 First Secretary (Sanitary and Phytosanitary) & Second Secretary (Primary Industries)
New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), Beijing
- Provide advice on NZ's primary product market access and food safety policies
 - Provide timely analyses on China's macro trends, policy directions, and reality on-the-ground
 - Resolve market access issues for NZ meat, seafood, horticultural products and processed foods
 - Represent NZ at events and expand MPI's network of contacts
 - Connect NZ Inc agencies and businesses with relevant Chinese associations and institutes
 - Secure and organise visits and meetings for Ministers, senior officials and industry representatives
 - Coordinate the signing and implementation of food-related cooperation arrangements
 - Supported the milk quality research cooperation with China's Academy of Agricultural Sciences
 - Worked on plant variety IP issues for Zespri kiwifruit
 - Support tikanga Māori at the Beijing Embassy, e.g. lead on waiata practices and whakatau
 - Manage MPI's six local staff
- 2018 - present Board Director
American Society for Microbiology (ASM)
- Approve strategic plans, taking into account global scientific trends and societal challenges, e.g. scientific integrity, open access, gain of function research, climate change, antimicrobial resistance, biodiversity, and emerging public health risks and society preparedness
 - Oversee operations, e.g. journals and publishing, scientist capability development, public outreach and science advocacy, and initiatives on diversity and inclusion
 - Supported a review of governance procedures to increase transparency and accountability
- 2016 - 2018 Senior Adviser (Secondment)
Market Access North Asia, Market Access, MPI
- Managed China market access of plant products and processed food
 - Managed Hong Kong market access for all primary sector products
 - Maintained relationships with key primary industry stakeholders
 - Provided advice on cross-border e-commerce to China
 - Provided scientific advice as part of MPI's pathogen management group

- 2015 - 2016 Adviser
Market Access Liaison & Cooperation, MPI
- Developed analytical tools for trade data used in Market Access Strategies
 - Coordinated capacity building programmes in food safety for Chinese officials
- 2014 - 2015 Adviser
Food Production & Processing, MPI
- Managed relationships with 11 food manufacturing sectors for the implementation of the Food Act 2014 (e.g. beverage manufacturers, nuts and seeds processors, grain processors)
 - Participated in the investigation of food safety responses
 - Delivered innovative guidance material on food safety for specific audiences, e.g. guidance videos for marae
- 2012 - 2014 Scientist
Food & Bio-based products, AgResearch Ltd
- Managed multi-disciplinary research projects on emerging pathogens
 - Conducted research on pathogens and spoilage bacteria in dairy and meat products
 - Reported to AgResearch Board and senior leadership
 - Peer-reviewed journals articles for Applied and Environmental Microbiology
- 2012 Medical Laboratory Technician (Molecular Biology)
Waikato District Health Board
- Undertook diagnostic testing of infectious diseases and genetic disorders
- 2007 - 2008 Chemistry Technician
Fonterra Co-operative Group
- Undertook quality assurance testing for dairy products

Education

- 2014 Doctor of Philosophy (Microbiology)
University of Waikato
 Thesis title: Survival of *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 during starvation at low temperatures
- 2006 Master of Science (Medical Science)
University of Auckland
- 1st Class Honours
- 2004 Bachelor of Science (Biomedical Sciences: Microbiology & Immunology)
University of Auckland

Relevant Accolades

- 2016 Director General Award - 'Where do I fit?' tool
Ministry for Primary Industries
 For delivery of an innovative digital tool to help businesses understand their obligations under the Food Act 2014 and provide tailored resources.
- 2013 - 2017 Young Ambassador of Science
American Society for Microbiology, New Zealand
 Connected New Zealand scientists with the international microbiology community and organised professional development programmes for early career scientists.