Membership and Appraisal Committee Annual Report

New posters and brochures describing the work of the society and types of memberships available were mailed to BSA Campus Representatives last fall through Kim Hiser in the BSA Business Office. Representatives are asked to put up a poster about the Botanical Society and answer questions about membership. There are approximately 240 representatives from most of the states (except Idaho, Utah and West Virginia) and 11 countries. States that are well represented include California, Illinois, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Additional representatives would be helpful in Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, and Rhode Island. The Chair of this committee was on the ad hoc Membership Tiers Committee that made recommendations about restructuring membership in the Botanical Society to compete more effectively with the American Society of Plant Physiologists, newly renamed the American Society of Plant Biologists. The Membership Tiers Committee Report was sent to the BSA Executive Committee and used as the basis for making recommendations about membership at the 2001 annual meeting. The recommendations included a restructuring of membership dues, new categories of membership, and additional options for membership with or without electronic access. Assuming the changes are approved at the annual meeting, new posters and brochures will be sent to the Campus Representatives this fall.

Membership in the Botanical Society over the last 10 years has dropped by about 200 members, from 2,575 in 1991 to 2,363 members in 2001. Systematics is the largest section and has stayed approximately the same in size for the last 10 years. Other large sections are the Ecological, Teaching, Developmental and Tropical sections. The Physiology section has seen the largest drop in membership.

For the coming year this committee will 1) maintain and update the list of BSA Representatives, 2) support a mailing of new posters and brochures with updated membership information at the beginning of the academic year, and 3) encourage maintaining the core membership, reaching out to new members through the internet and personal contacts (perhaps current members could receive some sort prize for recruiting new members), and developing new membership categories such as K-12 teachers.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Shea, Chairperson,
Membership and Appraisal Committee