Teaching Section:
The teaching section remains quite active in soliciting participation at the annual meetings. Fifteen oral papers and 16 posters will be presented at the 2014 annual meeting. Drs. Madhav Nepal and Carina Kristina Antilla, incoming and outgoing chairs respectively, will preside. Presenters represented the range of educational institutions from elementary, middle schools and high schools through community colleges, four-year colleges, and regional and research universities (including 1 international) as well as the Desert Botanical Garden. One session of the oral papers will be dedicated to the late Professor James Wandersee, former chair and program chair of the section who was awarded the section’s Postlethwait Award in 2013.

The Section and Education Committee co-sponsored a symposium, Vision & Change in Undergraduate Botany Education, whose speakers included: Cynthia Bauerle, Elisabeth Schussler, Phil Gibson, Sara Brownell, and Kathleen Archer. Phil Gibson, Education Committee Chair, will preside.

Education Committee:
In addition to the Vision and Change symposium above, the Committee has been engaged in two major initiatives: The USA Science and Engineering Festival in Washington D.C. and the PlantEd Digital Library. The USASEF was a rousing success primarily due to the efforts of Phil Gibson and the Committee in leading the planning and on-site activities. The Committee has committed several reviewers to the PlantEd project and is still in the process of selecting an additional (to Phil Gibson) Resource Editor and additional reviewers to represent BSA. They have organized a PlantEd workshop to be presented during the annual meeting.

Plans are underway to participate in the 2015 NABT meeting in Providence, RI, at least to present a workshop based on the “Inquiring about Plants” book, and perhaps a half-day symposium and paper sessions on plant biology.

Society Activities:
PlantingScience
It is clear from the data provided by Dr. Catrina Adams in her Education Summary when NSF support for the project terminated. For the past four semesters we have held steady at serving approximately 800 middle and high school students in approximately 200 teams. This is half the number of our peak in the fall of 2011. The data also suggests that something other than student/teacher interest or available mentors began to limit even earlier growth. Nevertheless, this has been one of the two most successful educational initiatives in the history of the Society and it focuses on the student cohort whose interests are known to be shifting away from science. We continue to believe that this is the right cohort for the BSA to target in its efforts to promote scientific learning about plants. PlantingScience gives the BSA a seat at the table of K-16 education reform and a voice/opportunity to contribute to the future of science education, the future of botany education in K-16, and the future of K-16 scientist partnerships, beyond the actual number of students/teams we directly impact each session and even beyond the 7-12
cohort of students with whom we directly interact. We have built a great community with substantial expertise in teaching and mentoring already through PlantingScience, so it makes a great testing ground and “laboratory” that are worth maintaining. It also might be worth mentioning also that it seems like K-12 science education is “catching up” with PlantingScience…NGSS, AP-bio revisions, etc. all complement what PS has been doing since it started.

Catrina’s report also notes that the “Inquiring about Plants” book is beginning to generate income to support the project and that a BioScience article based on the project has been accepted and another is in preparation for submission to CBE Life Sciences Education.

Plant Ed Digital Library, Life Discovery Conference, and other collaborations. BSA is a co-sponsor of both of these initiatives. As mentioned above, the Education Committee is directly involved with the first and the Society office with both. In addition, Catrina has kept the Society represented at meetings of several more specialized science education organizations and she and I represented the Society at two meetings of the new Professional Societies Alliance for Life Science Education (PSALSE), formerly the Achieving Vision & Change through Life Sciences Societies and Organizations group.

Respectfully submitted:

Marshall D. Sundberg
Director at Large for Education.