2014 Report by BSA Publications Committee:

- **Qiu-Yun (Jenny) Xiang** (2014), Chair
- William (Ned) Friedman (2014)
- Jeffrey Osborn (2014)
- Mitch Cruzan (2015)
- Michele Dudash (2016)
- Sean Graham, BSA Director at large - Publications, ex officio (2016)
- Judy Jernstedt, Editor, *AJB*, ex officio
- Pamela Diggle, Incoming Editor, *AJB*, ex officio
- Theresa Culley, Editor, *APPS*, ex officio
- Marshall Sundberg, Editor, *PSB*, ex officio
- Mackenzie Taylor, Incoming Editor, *PSB*, ex officio
- Amy McPherson, *AJB* Managing Editor, ex officio
- Richard Hund, *AJB* Production Editor, ex officio
- Beth Parada, *APPS* Managing Editor, ex officio

**Responsibilities of the committee:** This committee provides the link between the various publication activities of the society, the staff, and the board through the Publications Board Member. The committee seeks to elevate the BSA to be one of the most influential publishers of scientific content in plant biology, examines the role of all BSA publications such as *AJB*, *PSB*, *APPS*, and the web pages and works with outside evaluators on assessment of the journals. In addition, the committee will coordinate with the editors and associate editors on issues regarding their publications and consider and advise on new activities and initiatives, present a resource assessment on the impact of any new activities for the society, address issues impacting the publications, such as online vs. print copies, subjects to be covered, and other matters arising from the publications. This committee will interact with the Information Technology Committee to be sure the BSA web presence is representing the society publications appropriately.

Selection of the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal is the responsibility of the Board of Directors, with the Publication Board Member acting as the liaison for this activity. To fill a vacancy in this office, the President appoints a committee consisting of at least three members of The Society, including the chair of the Publications Committee. This committee solicits nominations for Editor-in-Chief, evaluates the candidates and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors, who then appoint the Editor.

**Highlights of the past year:** Pam Diggle has been selected to serve as the incoming Editor-in-Chief for the *American Journal of Botany*, and Mackenzie Taylor has been selected to serve as the incoming Editor-in-Chief for the *Plant Science Bulletin*. Their terms officially begin January 2015.

Specific information about *AJB*, *APPS*, and *PSB* (including metrics, special issues/sections/articles, centennial celebrations, subscription information, etc.), is available in the Council Reports: [http://www.botany.org/bsa/membership/council2014/council.shtml](http://www.botany.org/bsa/membership/council2014/council.shtml)

Items to be discussed at the strategic planning meeting concerning publications (e.g., Open Access, Updating the *AJB* "brand," and Big Data) are available here: [http://botany.org/SPC/BSASP2014-DiscussionforPublications.docx](http://botany.org/SPC/BSASP2014-DiscussionforPublications.docx)
BSA Survey Results (we will insert the link when we have clearance to do so)

**Skype calls** conducted by Pam Diggle, Sean Graham, and Amy McPherson with members of the botanical community regarding their thoughts on AJB and on the future of publishing in general.  
[See Council Reports, Director at Large for Publications, Sean Graham]

**Key Suggestions from the Committee:**
- Encourage more high-quality integrative papers, including reviews
- Mini-reviews that are short, topical
- Letters/commentaries—quick turnarounds on “hot” short papers
- We should do a better job at attracting new/upcoming areas, and some strong areas that don’t have a regular journal home
- Encourage more papers that combine organismal-level natural history with community or ecosystem-level processes, perhaps as the basis for a timely special issue or a review/opinion piece. This idea captures the spirit of AmJB content: the unison of diverse content at different levels of biological organization.
- Perception of content, and what the journal should focus on: how general should the content be (broad areas may be diluting our impact?)
- One way to elevate a particular research area, ex., evolutionary ecology, might be a symposium at the annual meeting that is well advertised and composed of leaders in the field. Additionally, the frequent overlap in dates between BSA and ESA might be diminishing the journal’s influence in this particular area.
- Shortening time to publication (we already employ the techniques of a triage process that returns manuscripts without review if they are clearly outside the focus of the journal or have serious language problems. Many papers are by international authors, and the editorial staff directs them to sources of editorial help if the language is the problem)
- If a focus is to increase readership and paper submissions by graduate students/next generation of plant biologists, need to understand that the people in this group have *incredibly short attention spans*. If content is even slightly difficult to find, they won’t find it.
- Pursue avenues for discovering articles, beyond electronic Tables of Contents (“other articles with related content” or “articles that cite this paper or are cited by this paper”); other avenues mentioned: Google, Google Scholar, Twitter, Facebook, BSA homepage
- Contemplate the function of categories in the context of potential authors and readers
- We should consider whether we want to attract more international authors, and if so, how (note: we do look at the research question, data, and results and recommend a suite of copy editors who specialize in scientific papers for ESL authors)
- Open access is expensive, but is there some middle ground, say to advertise the articles published in our journal to increase their visibility?

Miscellaneous topics of discussion:

- CHORUS: a publisher-directed option for public access to articles  
  http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2013/09/19/chorus-comes-into-focus/--We are pursuing this as the initiative progresses (FundRef, ORCid, DTD upgrade)
- A discussion session/workshop moderated by Chris Martine and Amy McPherson, “Publishing in 2014: What Should Authors and Publishers Do?” will be held Sunday, July 27, at 1 p.m. in the Snake Room of the Boise Center. If you’ve heard of “altmetrics” (or haven’t),
DORA, CHORUS, Mendeley/Academia.edu/ResearchGate, etc. this will be an opportunity to discuss.

- Institutional repository policy—final ms. (pre-copyediting and typesetting) may be posted, with links to the final, published article. Note our current Open Access policy: http://www.amjbot.org/site/misc/ifora.xhtml#OpenAccessPolicy
- Policies for data deposition requirements; AJB, http://www.amjbot.org/site/misc/ifora.xhtml#1DataAccess; APPS, http://www.botany.org/apps/APPS_Author_Instructions.html - 9DataAccess. Note that the BSA currently covers the fee for authors submitting their data to Dryad.
- ORCID integration in 2013, http://about.orcid.org/organizations/publishers
- New features implemented over the past year
  Figures/tables as PPT downloads for AJB: Allows readers to automatically generate a pre-formatted PowerPoint slide from figures and tables within the full-text of journal articles. Implemented figures-only view in March 2014.
  Cover Gallery for Back issues of AJB—added July 2014.
  Inclusion of Altmetric feature for APPS articles implemented early 2014.

Respectfully submitted by

Jenny Xiang, Amy McPherson, Richard Hund, and Beth Parada

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