2015 Student Representative’s report to the Board
The Botanical Society of America

Officers:

2015 has been a good year for student members of the Botanical Society of America. This year, we welcome Rebecca Povilus as the incoming Student Representative to the Board.

The student representatives have taken on a few new activities this year and continue to support several ongoing events.

First is the development of articles for the PSB entitled ‘The Student Section’. Our first article provided an overview of the new series and also an interview with Cathy Rushworth, the 2014 winner of the J.S. Karling award. We’ve also contributed an article about preparation for the 2015 Botany meeting and are preparing an article for the next issue that will be an interview with our new student rep, Becky. These articles have been promoted by BSA on Twitter and have been shared with the student members via Facebook links.

The Student Involvement Committee met at the 2014 meeting. At the meeting, we solicited feedback about past and current student activities at the meetings and how we can increase student involvement in the society. Based on some of the feedback, we increased our presence on Facebook, where we now have 350 members, which is up from 25 one year ago. On this page, students have been able to connect in fun and informal ways, but have also shared information about plants/fieldwork and have solicited for ideas about how to develop as professionals.

At the 2014 meeting, students organized (or helped to organize, in the case of the student social—thanks Johanne!) three events: an elevator speech workshop, the student social and networking event, and the third annual student luncheon. The elevator speech workshop gave an overview of how important it is to be able to succinctly but thoroughly explain to others what sort of research or work you do. They listened to good and bad examples of this and then were given a presentation and advice by Doug Soltis on the matter before writing their own ‘speeches’ and practicing presenting them about 15 times. Though this event was successful and received good feedback, it is not something we are doing at the 2015 meeting due to a slew of events. Angela plans to repeat this workshop again at the 2016 meeting.

The other two events, the luncheon and social will be repeated at this years meeting, though in a larger format due to more attendees. The luncheon last year had very good turnout and the adjustments to the format of the luncheon worked very well. Instead of having students rotate to different tables, the panelists rotated. We will continue this pattern this year, but are also adding a main speaker, Dr. Kate Hertweck, and several more panelists, as the event has grown in
attendance. The student social and networking event was also well attended last year and is expected to grow this year as we've invited student representatives from all other participating American and Canadian societies to attend and help grow the event. We expect this year’s social to have the highest attendance to date.

Looking toward the future, student representatives Jon Giddens, Angela McDonnell, and Rebecca Povilus aim to develop ways to remain relevant and to stay connected with the student members of BSA.

Thanks,

Jon Giddens
Angela McDonnell
Rebecca Povilus