

Membership and Communications Report

2024 March Board Meeting

Amelia Neely – Membership & Communications Manager

Membership Overview

	All of 2023		All of 2022		All of 2021		All of 2020		All of 2019	
	2023	% of Total	2022	% of Total	2021	% of Total	2020	% of Total	2019	% of Total
Corresponding	73	2.4%	72	2.3%	72	2.2%	69	2.2%	69	2.3%
Life	122	3.9%	112	3.6%	102	3.2%	94	3.0%	87	2.9%
Emeritus	349	11.3%	335	10.9%	310	9.6%	299	9.5%	283	9.4%
E Family	42	1.4%	47	1.5%	42	1.3%	43	1.4%	39	1.3%
Retired	80	2.6%	72	2.3%	75	2.3%	73	2.3%	66	2.2%
R Family	2	0.1%	4	0.1%	2	0.1%	3	0.1%	2	0.1%
3 Yr Professional	238	7.7%	251	8.1%	286	8.9%	289	9.2%	300	9.9%
3 Yr Prof Family	20	0.6%	19	0.6%	20	0.6%	22	0.7%	20	0.7%
Professional	701	22.6%	751	24.4%	809	25.2%	857	27.3%	881	29.1%
P Family	89	2.9%	88	2.9%	100	3.1%	103	3.3%	111	3.7%
CC Professional	28	0.9%	37	1.2%	36	1.1%	41	1.3%	38	1.3%
CC Family	4	0.1%	4	0.1%	2	0.1%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%
3 Yr Postdoc*	70	2.3%	61	2.0%	35	1.1%	15	0.5%		
PostDoc	103	3.3%	113	3.7%	140	4.4%	158	5.0%	159	5.3%
PD Family	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%
3 Yr Student	322	10.4%	311	10.1%	219	6.8%	144	4.6%	94	3.1%
Student	598	19.3%	610	19.8%	753	23.4%	713	22.7%	692	22.9%
S Family	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
S Chapter	49	1.6%	24	0.8%	15	0.5%	21	0.7%	22	0.7%
K-12 Teachers	7	0.2%	7	0.2%	9	0.3%	14	0.4%	12	0.4%
Affiliate	23	0.7%	23	0.7%	23	0.7%	30	1.0%	22	0.7%
Associate	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Amateur	50	1.6%	39	1.3%	54	1.7%	59	1.9%	51	1.7%
3 Yr Dev Nations	46	1.5%	26	0.8%	12	0.4%				
Developing Nations	81	2.6%	73	2.4%	96	3.0%	89	2.8%	69	2.3%
	3100		3082		3214		3142		3024	
	2023		2022		2021		2020	% of Total	2019	% of Total
Professional	2048	66.1%	2065	67.0%	2139	66.6%	2161	68.8%	2130	70.4%
Student	972	31.4%	948	30.8%	989	30.8%	878	27.9%	808	26.7%
Other	80	2.6%	69	2.2%	86	2.7%	103	3.3%	86	2.8%
<i>Growth/Decline</i>	3100		3082		3214		3142		3024	

BSA has a strong membership base that has averaged about 3100 members over the last five years. The end-of-year 2023 membership total was slightly higher than 2022's with 18 more members at the end of last year. The professional membership total continues to dip as the student members continue to increase, making up the difference. On a positive note, the end of January member numbers for 2024 are up just over 100 members compared to 2023 and as of this report (2-27-24) we are still ahead of last year's February membership total by almost 70 members.

The first quarter of the year is when many people join, or renew their membership, for conference registration discounts and access to BSA awards. In January and February members who are considered "Grace" (they expired in 2023) also continue to receive BSA member email communications (which are a membership benefit). In January these recently lapsed members receive a renewal message on the bottom of each of these member email communications, and in February that message is moved to the top of

the emails. In that way, those who did not yet renew for 2024 are receiving renewal notices frequently throughout the first two months both as stand-alone emails and via any member email communications.

The BSA Renewal season started on October 1st 2023 with email renewals being sent to those due to renew at the end of 2023 as well as lapsed members back to 2018 (with one lapsed mailing going back as far as 2015). The renewal season will continue for the next few months to encourage our members to renew, give gift memberships, update their information, and to make donations.

Membership Category Highlights 2023 compared to 2022:

- We saw an increase of 10 new **Life members** who took advantage of our one-time cost to stay members in perpetuity.
- The **student membership** end-of-year total increased slightly in 2023, increasing 2.5%, or 24 members. In 2022 it had decreased, so seeing this turn around is a good sign that the student group is continuing to grow. **This group is also at its second highest level in the last 10 years**, beat only by 2021.
 - 322 student members took advantage of the **3-Year student membership category in 2023**, up from 311 in 2022 (a 3.5% increase). This 3-year category seems to have stabilized this year as there was a large jump (42%) the year before. We can probably expect to see a similar amount of multi-year student memberships going forward, which is about 1/3 of the total student members.
 - There were 448 **New Student members** in 2023, which is 46% of the student member total. This percentage is about 5% higher than the previous year. It is important that we work to keep BSA relevant to these younger members so they see value in continuing their memberships in years to come. The 3-year gift membership program, which started in the Fall of 2021, will also continue to promote the longevity of student members in the society as well.
- The year-end 2023 **developing nations'** membership total was 127, which is an increase of 28% (28 members) compared to 2022.
 - The **developing nations' 3-year memberships** have increased by 77% in 2023 compared to 2022 (20 additional members). This category started in 2021, so this jump is not unexpected. Overall, this group is very stable with a general trend of increasing each year. The 3-Year gift memberships have been a huge help in ensuring this group of members will receive connection and support for a full three years.
- BSA gift memberships can be purchased for both students and developing nations' colleagues. The **2023 Gift Membership Drive**, which took place between October 1 through December 31, 2023, did not meet its goal of 175 gift memberships purchased, falling short by 30. When looking at the **Gift Membership program as a whole** comparing 2023 to 2022, 91 more gift memberships were purchased in 2023, this despite a price increase starting in September of that year. A total of 295 gift memberships were purchased in 2023

(69 3-year and 226 one-year gift memberships). Thank you if you purchased or donated a gift membership!

- **Professional Members** (Professional, 3-Year Professional and Professional Family) decreased by 61 members comparing 2023 to 2022. As seen in past years, this category renews at a high rate, but we do not have the new members that we need to keep this category growing when people leave. Though some people leave this category and move to the retired or emeritus categories, the increase in members in those categories are nowhere near 61 members.
 - A **Membership Ad-Hoc Committee** has been formed with one of its top priorities being to find out and address why Professional members are leaving the Society and how to attract new ones. Please note that we will be reaching out to board members in the coming month or two to help contact lapsed professional members that you may know. More information will be coming via email. You can also use these PDFs to print out and add to bulletin boards at your institutions or share via email:
 - [Membership Flyer](#) (full color)
 - [Membership Flyer](#) (grayscale)
 - [Student Award Opportunities Flyer](#) (can print in either color or grayscale)
 - We are also in the middle of a **lapsed membership survey** that will be completed at the end of March. We are already seeing some feedback that has been useful including that many professionals who leave are doing so because their institutions are no longer paying for association memberships. This survey will be done in two waves, the first for those BSA members who expired between 2015 and 2022, and a second wave in March for those who expired in 2023. You will receive a report on these surveys after the end of March.
 - Professional members are asked each year to consider a **membership fee increase of \$25 per year**. This additional amount goes toward the Graduate Student Research Award fund. For the 2023 fiscal year, **\$16,400 was raised by Professional members opting-in to this membership fee increase**. A total of **419 1-Year** and **79 3-Year Professional members** opted-in to the increase. Together, with GSRA donations (\$15,602), **\$32,002** has been raised for the GSRA.
- **Post Doc Members** at the end of 2023 were almost exactly at the same point as they were at the end of 2022, with a 10-member switch from a one-year to a three-year membership type. The 3-Year Post Doc memberships total 70 in their fourth year, and the growth in this category seems to be evening off, landing at about 40% of the Post Doc member total. The 3-year Post Doc category has, and will continue to, keep these members engaged for a longer time, helping them through the career pipe-line to professional membership at BSA.

In 2023, there were 7 Botany360 events as well as 4 “Phytochem Talks,” held by the Phytochemistry Section, which met every-other week for four weeks.

The following were the events held in 2023:

- [How to be a Successful BSA Student Representative](#) – January 18, 2023
- [Prepping for PLANTS: An Informational Webinar about the PLANTS Travel Awards for Underrepresented Undergrads](#) – March 10, 2023
- *Careers in Botany: Collections and Gardens (not recorded)* – April 5, 2023
- [Making the most out of Botany 2023 - A Student Conference Guide](#) – May 26, 2023
- [Applying to Graduate School Q&A Panel](#) – September 26, 2023
- *NSF GRFP Info Session and Q&A (not recorded)* – September 19, 2023
- [Reviewing Papers for Scientific Journals](#) – December 13, 2023

Events so far in 2024

- [Getting Involved in Service to BSA and Beyond](#) – January 8, 2024

Our goal is to have at least one event each month that fits with the strategic plan goals of the Society. Last year the Botany360 Ad-Hoc Committee met several times to discuss event ideas and to work across committees to organize the events. After 2 years, it is time to reorganize how the Botany360 Ad-Hoc Committee is organized and Heather and I are currently working on that strategy. We will share more details as they become finalized.

If you have ideas for events, or want to organize an event, please email me at aneely@botany.org.

Social Media Report:

I am currently responsible for posting on social media for BSA with the help of the Publications team, who handles the majority of publication posts. **This past year, we sent out a survey to BSA members about their feelings on whether BSA should stay on X (formally Twitter) and which platform we might want to consider joining to help make up for people leaving that platform.** There was an overwhelming feeling from many members that X was no longer representing their core values, but they also felt it would be short-sighted to dismiss the connections there completely. There was also a general feeling of interest to have BSA on [Bluesky](#). **BSA launched our page on Bluesky in mid-November 2023.** At that time, you had to have a code to start on Bluesky and our members really showed up when we started to collect them to share within our community. As you probably saw in the latest newsletter, we had more than 40 members donate over 130 codes, and just over 60 codes were requested for use by members. As of today, we have almost 370 followers on Bluesky!

Current Social Media Stats:

Instagram – 5,096 followers (up 364 since the November report)

Twitter – 21,953 followers (up 533 since the November report)

Facebook – 35,811 followers (up 312 since the November report)

Bluesky – 368 followers (new!)

Total Followers on all three platforms: **63,228** (up 1577 since the November report)

Please continue to use BSA's hashtags when you post on social media.
#BSAmembers #BSAstudents #BSAawards

The Joy Campaign

Rich Hund and I have been working with BSA President Brenda Molano-Flores to launch the "Joy Campaign!" This campaign will piggyback on Brenda's Botany 2023 President's talk about finding joy in everything that you do. Brenda is busy making a video that we will share on social media and encourage people to use the hashtag #PlantJoy to share how botany and plants bring joy to peoples' lives. Please join us when the campaign launches!