

**BSA Board Meeting MINUTES
November 18, 2024 via Zoom
11:00am-1:00pm Central**

Who attended:

BSA Staff: Heather Cacanindin, Amy McPherson, Johanne Stogran, Tricia Jackson, Amelia Neely, Catrina Adams

Board Members: Brenda Molano-Flores, Rachel Jabaily, Josh Felton, Jenny Xiang, Allison Miller, Melanie Link-Perez, Ken Cameron, Emily Sessa

Link to reports:

<https://botany.org/bsa-board-agendas/bsa-governance-information-fall-2024.html>

1. Minutes approval – Norm

The minutes for the following meeting was discussed and approved:

September 13, 2024

Motion: Brenda; Second: Ken. No objections.

2. Update on Virtual Climate Change Symposia – Heather

The inaugural virtual symposium went extremely well with over 1000 registered and about 370 attended day one and over 230 attended the second day. Thanks extended to Vivian Negron-Ortiz, the Ad Hoc Committee members and Amelia that worked on pulling the event together. We await the survey results for direction on future events of this nature.

3. Business Office Report – Heather

Heather provided an update from the BSA Business Office. With \$1.5 million in investment gains for FY2024, the fiscal year ended with a better overall financial picture than budgeted. Membership totals are up compared to the same timeframe last year. Much work has taken place to transition to our new Conference Manager and also in tying up the fiscal year. Tucson will no longer be the 2025 Botany conference location due to renovations on the property so Melanie, Heather, Johanne and Lori have been looking into other options.

4. Botany Conference Update – Melanie

Melanie reviewed the final financial situation for Botany 2024 which was a scientific success but a financial loss for the societies involved. The cost of AV and Food and Beverage combined with a shift in the composition of the attendees registered (less professionals and more students/IBC year) contributed to the loss. With the new conference management contract, the conference will save about \$35K in personnel expenses as well as savings from group contract negotiations with vendors such as X-CD, AV, etc.

The Board considered options presented for moving the Botany 2025 meeting to various venues due to the renovations taking place at the previously contracted venue in Tucson. The importance of reasonable costs for students was mentioned as well as avoiding states that have hostile laws related to the safety of some of our constituents. We need to examine the financial consequences of any place that is being seriously considered. The Program Planning Committee will be meeting shortly to consider the proposals from San Francisco, Palm Springs, Charlotte, Raleigh, Dallas, St. Louis, etc.

There was agreement that there is urgency in making this decision and announcing the new 2025 location as our members need to make plans.

Omaha for 2026 was not working out anyway due to issues with their contract and food and beverage minimums required, among other things. They can be considered as a venue in the future if the Program Planning committee wishes to pursue the location as an option.

5. BSA Financial Report – Allison

Allison provided the highlights from FY2024 finances. BSA is on solid financial footing, no surprises in the budget because we budget extremely conservatively. She reviewed the FY2024 Profit and Loss statement and noted that our overall loss for the year was less than was budgeted. BSA makes up that difference by pulling a small percentage from the investment earnings.

We will need to be mindful that we may see upcoming changes at NSF to funding for programs that involve DEI components. The Board agreed that we should be considering BSA's strategy for dealing with a potential loss of financial resources when it comes to this particular topic. We should consider the worst case scenario in case funds for grant programs are pulled in the future. The Board and BSA Financial Advisory Committee should be talking about these issues during the coming year.

Since the inaugural endowment push was so successful, year-end giving efforts will focus on student gift memberships and donations to the graduate student research awards.

BREAK – 10 minutes

6. BSA Nominations and Election Reform– Brenda

Brenda reviewed this history of nomination and election reform over the past year and presented the “Balanced Board Matrix” as well as a revised Nominations Acceptance Form for Board review. These tools were reviewed by the Election Committee during their recent meeting. Both documents include various skill sets and demographic information that will be collected and anonymized so that gaps on the Board can be identified.

Motion to accept the use of the documents: Allison; Second: Rachel. Motion passed.

7. Award Committee Members – Heather

There are several award committees with holes that need filling with new members.

Heather presented a list of possible candidates coming from those committees and sought Board input.

https://botany.org/file.php?file=SiteAssets/governance/2024_Fall/Award_Committee_Appointments_20241.pdf

For all the committees, it was decided that the names were appropriate and the committee could make the final selection.

For the Synthesis Prize, several new names were added to the list and the Publications Team will make the final selection. (Names added included Aaron Liston, Jochen from Pubs Committee, Susanne Renner, Susana Magallon)

For the Darkbaker Award, which needs a committee assigned for the first time in many years, Ken Karol was suggested as an additional name.

8. Education and Outreach – Catrina

Catrina provided an update on current grants and potential new grant proposals. We are still waiting to hear about the ESA grant proposal to which we signed on. There are deadlines in January and February for the proposals we are looking to put together. Catrina will stay in touch with NSF program officers to ensure we know of any changes coming.

9. AISES and Indigenous Voices Update –Brenda, Catrina and Amy

Brenda, Catrina, and Amy shared takeaways from the Indigenous Voices convening with the three other societies at HHMI. Once the report is finalized, it will be shared along with an action plan for BSA.

10. Other Business

A few suggestions were made for names to consider for a new Ad Hoc Committee on Ethical Guidelines for the Society. Jenny and Heather will work with Karolina and Rachel on this effort and add a few committee members.

A discussion took place about whether the Society should stay on the social media platform known as X. Recently, there has been a dramatic shift of people moving away from X to BlueSky. We still have a lot of followers on X, but less engagement.

A decision on X could not be made today due to lack of time, but the board will take a vote via email in the next few weeks.