

# Membership and Communications Report

2025 March Board Meeting

Amelia Neely – Membership & Communications Manager

## Membership Overview

	All of 2024		All of 2023		All of 2022		All of 2021		All of 2020	
	<b>2024</b>	% of Total	<b>2023</b>	% of Total	<b>2022</b>	% of Total	<b>2021</b>	% of Total	<b>2020</b>	% of Total
Corresponding	75	2.4%	73	2.4%	72	2.3%	72	2.2%	69	2.2%
Life	129	4.1%	122	3.9%	112	3.6%	102	3.2%	94	3.0%
Emeritus	360	11.5%	349	11.3%	335	10.9%	310	9.6%	299	9.5%
E Family	42	1.3%	42	1.4%	47	1.5%	42	1.3%	43	1.4%
Retired	79	2.5%	80	2.6%	72	2.3%	75	2.3%	73	2.3%
R Family	2	0.1%	2	0.1%	4	0.1%	2	0.1%	3	0.1%
3 Yr Professional	245	7.8%	238	7.7%	251	8.1%	286	8.9%	289	9.2%
3 Yr Prof Family	20	0.6%	20	0.6%	19	0.6%	20	0.6%	22	0.7%
Professional	693	22.2%	701	22.6%	751	24.4%	809	25.2%	857	27.3%
P Family	88	2.8%	89	2.9%	88	2.9%	100	3.1%	103	3.3%
CC Professional	26	0.8%	28	0.9%	37	1.2%	36	1.1%	41	1.3%
CC Family	5	0.2%	4	0.1%	4	0.1%	2	0.1%	3	0.1%
3 Yr Postdoc*	60	1.9%	70	2.3%	61	2.0%	35	1.1%	15	0.5%
PostDoc	97	3.1%	103	3.3%	113	3.7%	140	4.4%	158	5.0%
PD Family	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%
3 Yr Student	370	11.8%	322	10.4%	311	10.1%	219	6.8%	144	4.6%
Student	551	17.6%	598	19.3%	610	19.8%	753	23.4%	713	22.7%
S Family	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%
S Chapter	51	1.6%	49	1.6%	24	0.8%	15	0.5%	21	0.7%
K-12 Teachers	7	0.2%	7	0.2%	7	0.2%	9	0.3%	14	0.4%
Affiliate	14	0.4%	23	0.7%	23	0.7%	23	0.7%	30	1.0%
Associate	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Amateur	59	1.9%	50	1.6%	39	1.3%	54	1.7%	59	1.9%
3 Yr Dev Nations	65	2.1%	46	1.5%	26	0.8%	12	0.4%		
Developing Nations	88	2.8%	81	2.6%	73	2.4%	96	3.0%	89	2.8%
	<b>3126</b>		<b>3100</b>		<b>3082</b>		<b>3214</b>		<b>3142</b>	
	<b>2023</b>	% of Total	<b>2023</b>	% of Total	<b>2022</b>	% of Total	<b>2021</b>	% of Total	<b>2020</b>	% of Total
Professional	2074	66.3%	2048	66.1%	2065	67.0%	2139	66.6%	2161	68.8%
Student	972	31.1%	972	31.4%	948	30.8%	989	30.8%	878	27.9%
Other	80	2.6%	80	2.6%	69	2.2%	86	2.7%	103	3.3%
<i>Growth/Decline</i>	<b>3126</b>		<b>3100</b>		<b>3082</b>		<b>3214</b>		<b>3142</b>	

BSA continues to have a strong membership base that has averaged over 3130 members over the last five years. The end-of-year 2024 membership total was slightly higher than 2023's with 26 more members at the end of last year. Remarkably, the Professional and Student member totals are almost exactly the same as last year, but distributed slightly differently with more people taking the 3-year option in both groups. Developing Nations membership totals continue to grow as does our Emeritus group of retired members.

As of the end of February 2025, our membership numbers were approximately 100 members behind compared to the same time last year. This gap is not entirely

unexpected. One major influence is the delayed opening of registration for Botany 2025 due to the venue change (registration opened on February 2nd, 2024, but as of today, March 26<sup>th</sup>, it has yet to open). Additionally, various political changes have impacted our members' ability to renew their memberships or join the Society, and attend the conference. Many members typically join BSA for access to discounted rates to the Botany Conference, so they may be waiting to see the rates and for registration to begin. Despite these challenges, we remain confident that we can maintain strong membership totals for 2025, although they may continue to plateau.

Please note that the BSA Renewal season started on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 with email renewals being sent to those due to renew at the end of 2024 as well as lapsed members back to 2020 (with a few very-lapsed mailings 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 2024 compared to 2023:

- We saw an increase of 7 new **Life members** who took advantage of our one-time cost to stay members in perpetuity.
- The **student membership** end-of-year total was the exact same as in 2023, which already had **the second highest level of student members in the last 10 years**.
  - In 2023, **370 student members took advantage of the 3-Year student membership category**, up from 322 in 2022, representing a **15% increase**. This trend of students opting for multi-year memberships continues to grow, which is especially beneficial during these challenging times. It ensures that these students remain a part of the BSA community for multiple years, regardless of external factors.
  - There were **384 New Student members in 2024**, which is about 40% of the total student population. That is a loss of 14% in new student members and compares to 46% of the student members being new last year. This drop in new members can be a big part in why the student membership total has stalled comparing this year and last.
  - Overall, the student group is strong and active. We need to be thoughtful of how the changes in government funding will affect this group in the next few years, and find ways to support them so that BSA membership is an asset to their careers. **One way the board can help with this is to purchase donated gift memberships** so we can continue to offer financial aid to join the Society when needed. [Click here](#) to donate a membership by putting an "x" in the recipient fields.
- The year-end 2024 **Developing Nations'** membership total was 153, which is an increase of 20% compared to 2023.
  - The **developing nations' 3-year memberships** have increased by 41% in 2024 compared to 2023 (19 additional members). This category started in 2021 and 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 are available for both students as well as for colleagues in developing nations. The **2024 Gift Membership Drive**, which ran from October 1 to December 31, 2024, successfully met its goal of 100 gift memberships—thank you to all who participated! However, the total number of gift memberships purchased declined significantly in 2024, most likely due to a price increase implemented in October 2023 (as well as other external financial pressures). Approximately 100 fewer gift memberships were purchased, resulting in a decrease of about \$500 in total contributions. The goal of the price increase was to generate additional income, but it may be that some students just purchased their own memberships outright during this time instead of relying on gift memberships, so the real loss may be less. **In my opinion, we should maintain the current gift membership prices for 2025 and reassess them next year to see if this trend persists.** Based on that, we can determine if adjustments are needed for the renewal season beginning in Fall 2026. As for the up-coming gift membership drive this Fall, we will consider offering a discounted gift membership rate for that time period.
  - **Professional Members** (Professional, 3-Year Professional and Professional Family) stayed practically the same as the end of 2023, which is a nice change compared to the loss of members in recent 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.
    - 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 2024 calendar year (not fiscal), **\$13,550 was raised by Professional members opting-in to this membership fee increase.** A total of **392 1-Year** and **50 3-Year Professional members** opted-in to the increase. Together, with GSRA donations (\$18,217), **\$31,767** was raised for the GSRA fund for all of 2024.
  - **Postdoc membership** saw a decrease of 9.2% (16 members) from 2023 to 2024. The 3-Year Postdoc memberships, now in their fifth year, total 60, down by 10 from the previous year. This indicates that growth in the 3-Year Postdoc category has plateaued, with these memberships now representing just under 40% of the total Postdoc membership. The 3-Year Postdoc category has played a crucial role in keeping these members engaged for a longer period, supporting them through their career development toward professional membership with BSA. It is expected that most 3-Year Postdoc members will not renew at this level, as they will likely transition to professional membership by the end of their term. Supporting this group during this pivotal time of transition is vital to ensure they remain connected to BSA as they move forward in their careers.
-

## **Botany360**

In 2024, there were 10 Botany360 events as well as 12 “Phytochem Talks,” held by the Phytochemistry Section, which met every-other week for four weeks.

### **The following were the events held in 2024:**

- [Getting Involved in Service to BSA and Beyond](#) – January 8, 2024
- [How to be a Successful BSA Student Rep](#) – January 26, 2024
- [PLANTS Drop-In Office Hours](#) – February 23 and 24, 2024
- [International Fieldwork Q&A panel](#) – April 22, 2024
- [Fulbright US Scholar Program: Insights from an Alumni Ambassador](#) – April 29, 2024
- [Longwood Gardens Fellows Program Informational Webinar](#) – May 8, 2024
- [Now you’re a new PI, what’s next?](#) – May 28, 2024
- [Disabled in Botany Networking Event](#) – September 24, 2024
- [NFS Workshop for GRFP 2024](#) – September 26, 2024
- [Applying to Grad School 2024](#) – October 3, 2024

### **Events so far in 2025**

- [Prepping for PLANTS: An Informational Webinar about the PLANTS Travel Awards for Underrepresented Undergrads](#) – January 24, 2025
- [BSA Listening and Discussion Session](#) – March 5, 2025

Our goal is to have at least one event each month that fits with the strategic plan goals of the Society. If you have ideas for events, or want to organize an event, please email me at [aneely@botany.org](mailto: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. Currently we post on Instagram, Facebook, Bluesky, and the BSA Slack. As of January 1, 2025 we no longer post on X (formally Twitter), and in November 2023 we started our Bluesky account.

### **Current Social Media Stats:**

Instagram – 6,853 followers (up 899 since the November report)

Facebook – 37,256 followers (up 394 since the November report)

Bluesky – 4,526 followers (**up 3,848 since the November report!**)

BSA Slack – 699 (up 21 since the November report)

Total Followers on all three platforms: **49,334** (up 5,162 since the November report if omitting the X total in that report)

We are very happy to see how robust the Bluesky account has become and the increase in Instagram is higher than usual as well. We have not received any negative feedback in regards to us ceasing to post on X. And to remind you, we kept the X account so that no one can have our name, and secondly, to have as a historical reference if needed and to still have our name for those who look for it. Our profile does state that we no longer post on X and our last post encourages people to join us on Bluesky.

Please continue to use BSA’s hashtags when you post on social media.

#BSAmembers #BSAstudents #BSAawards #IamaBotanist

---

**We are excited to have three development campaigns this year.**

- The first will be **International Plant Appreciation Day** on April 13 which is to raise Unrestricted funds.
- The second will be the **A Day for BSA** which will take place on August 27<sup>th</sup> which will raise funds for the **Endowment**.
- And an **end-of-year donation campaign** will run the last 1-2 months of the year with a goal of raising funds for the **Grad Student Research Awards**.

Along with the Development Committee, we will be reaching out to collect stories, interviews, and even videos for these campaigns. If you are interested in telling your story, or you have someone in mind to connect with, email me at [aneely@botany.org](mailto:aneely@botany.org). We will be asking 100% of the board (and possibly the leaders of the committees and sections) to give for each of these campaigns at any amount (even just \$10!). So please give and help us show that our leadership supports our goals that these funds help to make possible.